









THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR;**

OR, A  
*PARAPHRASE AND VERSION*  
OF  
**THE NEW TESTAMENT;**  
WITH CRITICAL NOTES,  
AND *AN* PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

BY  
**PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D.D.**  
IN SIX VOLUMES.

**VOL. VI.**

CONTAINING THE EPISTLES OF  
**PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS,**

JAMES,  
I. PETER,  
II. PETER,  
I. JOHN,

II. JOHN,  
III. JOHN,  
JUDE,  
REVELATIONS.

WITH PROPER INDEXES TO THE WHOLE.  
**TENTH EDITION—CAREFULLY CORRECTED.**

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
**A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,**  
BY **ANDREW KIPPIS, D.D. F.R.S. AND S.A.**

— Πάντα τα αποστολικά πινούλης, το ὅσον ἐφ' ἡμῖν καθέστηκε  
υἷος, αὐτὰ τηρῶμεν, καὶ μηδὲν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπειρία-παράσσει  
τες ἐκ εἰδώς (ῥυθιναι τῶν λειτουργῶν παραχωρεῖν.

ORIGINAL.

**LONDON:**

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; W. OTTIDGE AND SON; J. WALKER; BARTON  
AND HARVEY; J. NUNN; C. LAW; SONOMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND CO.; VERNON,  
HOOD, AND CO.; J. CUTRELL; LACKINGTON AND CO.; J. MAWMAN; MATHEWS AND LEIGH;  
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**1811.**



# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER, BY THE EDITOR.

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THE author of this work had written upon the title of that manuscript-volume, which contained the Epistle to the Romans, the following direction:—  
“ N. B If I die before this work is finished, as it is most probable I shall, I desire that it may be transcribed, as far as it goes, by Mr. Orton; and that he would add such notes as he shall judge most proper, from my written critical notes on the Epistles; and that it may be printed, by subscription, in one, two, or three volumes, as shall be judged most convenient, and according to the progress which Providence may permit me to make in it. Jan. 1st, 1746-7.”—I think it therefore incumbent upon me to inform the subscribers what progress the author had made in this work, and what has been done to it since his death, in order to remove those suspicions which often arise concerning the authenticity of posthumous works.

When it pleased God to put a period to the author's life and labours, he had finished his Paraphrase and Improvement of the epistolary part of the New Testament, and of the book of the Revelation, and fairly wrote it out in short-hand; and had added the principal notes which he intended to publish. At the end of the manuscript-volume containing the Revelation, he had wrote, “ Through the good hand of God upon me, which I desire most thankfully to acknowledge, I ended the first copy of the Family Expositor, Dec. 31st, 1748, exactly two years after I began to write upon the Romans: having pursued it, during that time,

"without the interruption of one single day; such  
 "health and such resolution did it please God to give  
 "me, amidst the various scenes of business, danger,  
 "and amusement, through which I passed! May his  
 "grace raise to himself a monument of praise from  
 "this feeble effort to explain, illustrate, and enforce  
 "his word!"—And under,—“I ended my Notes on  
 "the books I had thus paraphrased and improved,  
 "Aug. 21st, 1749, having daily pursued the work in  
 "like manner, whether at home or abroad.”—He had  
 transcribed for the Press, the Paraphrase, Improve-  
 ments, and Notes, of the two first volumes, as now pub-  
 lished; the Paraphrase and Improvements of the epis-  
 tle to the Hebrews, and the two first epistles of John.  
 —The Notes on these three epistles together with the  
 Paraphrase, Improvements, and Notes, on the remain-  
 ing epistles, and the Revelation, were transcribed from  
 his short-hand copy, by my own hand, or under my in-  
 spection, by some of his pupils; and I carefully revised  
 the transcript several times, and compared it with his  
 short-hand copy.—I can assure the subscribers, that  
 the utmost caution has been used, that no one senti-  
 ment of the author should be suppressed or changed,  
 and only such expressions varied, as to avoid tautolo-  
 gy, and for the sake of perspicuity and accuracy, it  
 might be presumed the author would have varied, had  
 he transcribed this part of the work, and given it his  
 finishing hand. In the margin of the short-hand copy,  
 he had wrote hints of some alterations to be made in  
 the phraseology and length of some sentences, as well  
 as of notes he intended to add when he transcribed it  
 for the press. I have endeavoured to follow these hints  
 in the best manner I could; and accordingly a few  
 notes have been added to vindicate or illustrate his  
 Version or Paraphrase, and references inserted to other  
 critics; most of which were taken from his notes, ac-  
 cording to the direction mentioned above. On the  
 whole, I hope the attentive reader, who is acquainted  
 with his style and spirit, will discover nothing in the  
 latter part of the Work unsuitable to either; and will  
 join with me in thankfulness to God, who spared his

life till he had completed this important and useful undertaking.

There is one occurrence relating to it, which my own judgment, and that of many of the author's friends, forbid me to conceal, and the rather, because it has been greatly misrepresented. During the author's life (in June 1750,) a fire, occasioned by a wax-candle being left on his writing-desk, broke out in his study, and consumed many of his papers, and part of one volume of the short-hand copy of this Work; but the light of the fire being providentially discovered by an opposite neighbour, who gave an immediate alarm, it was speedily extinguished. When the author was informed of the accident, he seemed most anxious about the preservation of this manuscript; and when the flames were extinguished, to his great joy and surprise, it appeared that the part of this volume, and that only which was destroyed, had been transcribed, and the transcript lay in another place out of danger, and all the untranscribed pages were perfectly legible, and only the edges of them singed. Being an eye-witness of the danger and deliverance, I record this account of it, partly for the satisfaction of the subscribers with regard to the exaggerated report, but chiefly as it seems to denote a particular care of Providence in preserving this work, and a favourable omen, that God intends it for extensive and lasting usefulness. *Whoso is wise, and will observe such things; even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* Psal. cvii. 43.

In the name of the author's family, I heartily thank the subscribers for their encouragement of this Work, and the gentlemen who have kindly superintended the Press; and I pray that it may answer those pious and benevolent ends for which it was composed and is now published.

J. ORTON



THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR:**  
OR,  
A PARAPHRASE  
ON THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE  
**HEBREWS.**  
WITH CRITICAL NOTES,  
AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.







A

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

### PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

### EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

**L**EARNED men have been divided in their opinions concerning the author of this celebrated epistle. It hath been ascribed to St. Luke, to Barnabas, and to *Clement of Rome*. But though some considerable persons have given the sanction of their authority to the several opinions I have mentioned, yet the most prevailing one among the ancients was, and among the moderns still is, that this epistle is a genuine work of St. Paul. Among those who believe that St. Paul was its author, there are some indeed who imagine it was written by him in the Hebrew or Syriac language, and translated into Greek either by St. Luke or Clement. And it is certain there was such an ancient tradition, mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Jerom. And there are arguments in support of all the particular hypotheses concerning the author of the epistle, the language in which it was originally written, and the person who translated it into Greek; I say, there are various arguments in favour of all these different opinions, taken from similarity of style, the use of particular words, and the manner of composition. But I apprehend, whoever carefully considers the observations that have been made by very learned men, upon the lan-

guage of St. Paul, of Luke, or Clement, in defence of their respective hypotheses, will conclude, that such arguments are very little to be depended upon, as they frequently are much indebted to a strong imagination, and, in the present case, appear to be urged with equal plausibility on all sides.

I have already given my opinion, that St. Paul was the author of this epistle, (Vol. III. sect 60, note<sup>s</sup>;) and that because the current of antiquity, though not the authority of every individual father, runs strongly this way; Jerom expressly asserts, that the epistle to the Hebrews had been received as St. Paul's by all the Greek writers. And though this epistle wants one characteristic of St. Paul's other epistles, the prefixing his name, and his usual form of inscription; for a very obvious reason, that he might not too early awaken the prejudices the Jewish converts had conceived against him; yet it might be easy to collect from the epistle itself, some strong intimations that St. Paul was its author.

It is of less importance in what language it was originally written, if the translation were made, (as the tradition says,) by some companion or fellow-labourer of St. Paul. Though it should be considered, that the presumption lies on the side of our present Greek copy, that it is an original, and not a translation; and therefore the arguments which induce any to be of a contrary opinion, should be very strong and convincing. If the reader should be inclined to examine this matter more accurately, he may consult Spanheim's Dissertation concerning the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, particularly part iii. chap. 2, concerning the language;\* and the learned Mr. Hallet's Introduction to his Supplement to Mr. Pierce's Paraphrase; which Mr. Wolfius hath translated into Latin, and published at the close of the 4th volume of his *Curæ Philologicæ*, with some of his own remarks and strictures in the margin. As for the date of this epistle, I am of opinion it was about the year 63, while St. Paul was imprisoned at Rome, or quickly after it. See Vol. III. sect. ix. note<sup>s</sup>, and compare Heb. xiii. 23.

\* *Fred. Spanheim, Op. Tom. ii. p. 245, &c.*

*to the Epistle to-the Hebrews.*

This epistle was written to the Hebrews, or converts from Judaism to Christianity, who inhabited at least some one particular country, (as may be inferred from the apostle's saying, chap. xiii. 19, *I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner*; and verse 23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom if he come shortly, I will see you.*) And this country most probably was Judea, where the converts to Christianity from Judaism were almost incessantly persecuted by their unbelieving brethren, who tenaciously adhered to the constitution and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which Christianity superseded. Now the manifest design of St. Paul in this epistle, is, "to confirm the Jewish Christians in the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ, which they might be in danger of deserting, either through the insinuations or ill-treatment of their persecutors."

It was natural for the zealous defenders of the Mosaic law to insist upon the divine authority of Moses, the distinguishing glory and majesty which attended its first promulgation by the ministry of angels, and the special privileges with which it invested those who adhered to it. In answer to all arguments and insinuations of this kind, the apostle shews,

I. That in all these several articles, Christianity had an infinite superiority to the law. Which topic he pursues from chap. i. to xi. Reminding the believing Hebrews, That it was a most extraordinary favour, that God had sent them a revelation by his own Son, whose glory was far superior to that of angels, (chap. i. throughout;) very naturally inferring from hence the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation, which in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons: particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God; (chap. ii. throughout.) With the same view he further magnifies Christ as superior to Moses their great legislator; and from the sentence passed on those who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of despising the

promises of the gospel; (chap. iii. 1—13.) And as it was natural from hence, to call to mind that rest in Canaan to which the authority wherewith Moses was invested was intended to lead them, the apostle cautions them against the sin of unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression, which he shews to refer to a nobler state of rest than what the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages: (chap. iii. 14.—iv. 21.) Further enforcing this caution by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ as our High Priest, of whose Divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises further illustrations of so important a topic; (chap. iv. 12, to the end; chap. v. throughout.) Declaring that he would advance to sublimer truths without dwelling upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless; (chap. vi. 1—9.) and then for the establishment and comfort of sincere believers, he sets before them the consideration of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to his sacred engagements, the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner; (chap. vi. 9, to the end.) Further to illustrate the character of our blessed Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, he enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from instances in which the priesthood of Melchisedec excelled the Levitical priesthood, he infers the surpassing glory of the priesthood of Christ to the priesthood under the law; (chap. vii. 1—17.) From these premises, which plainly manifested the defects of the Aaronical priesthood, he argues, that it was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ, to which it was introductory and subservient; and by consequence, that the obligation of the law was henceforth dissolved; (chap. viii. 18, to the end.) He then recapitulates, what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of

Christ as the High Priest of Christians, and further illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old: (chap. viii. throughout.) Illustrating further the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high priest did on the great day of atonement; (chap. ix. 1—14.) And having enlarged on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it (chap. ix. 15, to the end,) and proved that legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience, and from thence argued the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it, (chap. x. 1—15.) the apostle urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant conferred on them, to the purpose of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other. (chap. x. 15—25.)

The apostle having thus at large obviated the insinuations and objections of the Jews to the gospel of Christ, as inferior to the Mosaic dispensation, by shewing its transcendent excellence in a clear and convincing light, for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds,

II. To awaken their attention, and fortify their minds against the storm of persecution, which had come, and was further likely to come upon them, for the sake of the Christian faith. To this end, he reminds them of the extremities they had already endured in defence of the gospel, and of the fatal consequences which would attend their apostasy; (chap. x. 26, to the end.) Calling to their remembrance the renowned examples of faith and fortitude which had been exhibited by holy men mentioned in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, (chap. xi. 1—16.) by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. (chap. xi. 17—29.) Concluding his discourse with glancing on many other illustrious worthies; and besides those recorded in scripture, referring

also to the case of several who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. (chap. xi. 30.—xii. 2.)

And having thus executed his design in the argumentative part of the epistle, he applies the whole by exhorting the Hebrew Christians to sustain and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed; and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness. (chap. xii. 3—14.) Cautioning them against disparaging the blessings of the gospel, and making them a sacrifice either to any secular views or sensual gratifications; representing the incomparable excellence of these blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced, which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal; (chap. xii. 15—29.) Exhorting them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, steadfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man, from the consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ; which ought always to encourage us resolutely to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet with in his cause; (chap. xiii. 1—16.) Concluding the whole, with recommending to them some particular regards to their pious ministers; and entreating their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction: (chap. xiii. 17, to the end.)

# PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

## EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

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### SECT. I.

*The Apostle reminds the Hebrews to whom he writes, of the great favour God had done them in sending them a revelation by his own Son; on whose glory he expatiates as far superior to that of angels, intending by this representation to engage them to embrace and retain the gospel. Heb. I.-1, to the end.*

HEBREWS I. 1.

**G**OD, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

HEBREWS I. 1.

**T**HE great and wise God,<sup>a</sup> who in his wonderful condescension hath at many times, and in various manners,<sup>b</sup> of old, spoken to the fathers of the Jewish nation, by the prophets, whom he hath in successive ages raised up and employed as the messengers of his will to them,

SECT.  
I.  
Heb.  
I. 1.

<sup>a</sup> God who, &c.] Though St. Paul was the author of this epistle, as we have already observed, yet he does not begin it, as he does most of his other epistles, by prefixing his name to it; the reason of which probably was, that those to whom he was now writing were under strong prejudices against his name; and he was not willing to alarm those

prejudices at the beginning of his letter.

<sup>b</sup> Many times, and various manners.] The first word, as some apprehend, refers to the parcels by which God's will was delivered, in opposition to a complete revelation; and the last, to the manner in which it was made known, namely, by dreams, visions, urim, prophets, voices, signs.



# 10 God, in these last days, hath spoken unto us by his Son,

SECT.

1.

Heb

I 2

*In these last days* hath magnified his mercy in a yet more amazing manner. for he *hath spoken unto us by the Son,*<sup>c</sup> his only-begotten and best beloved Son, whom he hath sent into our world as the Ambassador of his mercy to us, even that illustrious person, *whom he hath appointed the heir and possessor of all things.*<sup>d</sup> He hath adjusted all things in such a manner as to advance the purposes of his glory, and committed the administration of his providential kingdom into his hands, *by whom,* and in reference to whose honour, *he also created all things, and constituted the ages,*<sup>e</sup> and dispensations of the church and world. I speak of that great Emanuel, whom we have so long been taught to know and adore, *who being the effulgent ray of [his] glory, and the express delineation of his person,*<sup>f</sup> on whom his likeness is enstamped in living characters in a manner which no created nature can admit, *and upholding the universe* which he hath made *by the efficacious word of his Father's power,*<sup>g</sup> which is ever resident in him, as his own, by virtue of that intimate though incomprehensible union which renders them one, (John x. 30) was nevertheless set forth in the feeble dress and humble form of human flesh, that he might be our atoning sacrifice. And accordingly, *having by himself performed that great transaction, which is the cleansing away of our sins,* he is now returned to the celestial world from which he descended for this gracious purpose, and *is sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high,*<sup>h</sup> of that glorious

2 With these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,

<sup>c</sup> *By the Son* ] This is no argument that God did not speak by Christ before but only that it was not in so clear and express a manner

<sup>d</sup> *Heir and possessor* ] Mr Pierce learnedly vindicates the latter of these interpretations

<sup>e</sup> *(Constituted the ages)* ] The sentiment, as thus expressed, is a very important one, but if any insist upon rendering *always, the world itself,* I shall not oppose it, for it is certain that St Paul asserts this doctrine, Col i 15—17 if not here

<sup>f</sup> *Delineation of his person* ] That is, with Leigh, answering to the Divine perfections, as the impression of the wax

does to the engraving of the seal—It is observable, that Philo calls the *Logos* *χαρακτης και τικτως Θεου* See Scott's Christian Life, Vol III p 559

<sup>g</sup> *Word of his power* ] Many explain this of the Father's power, which is the sense I have given in the paraphrase. Some copies read *virtus*, which would fully justify our version. But if the power of the Father be the power of Christ, to be used by him at pleasure for the security of his people, it seems to be all that the establishment of our faith in him requires

<sup>h</sup> *Sat down on the right-hand* ] Some understand this of the right-hand of the Shekinah, in the most honourable place

and excellent Being, who reigns supreme in the heaven of heavens.

4 Being much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be my Son? For if these words were immediately spoken of Solomon, it was chiefly as a type of Christ, the great son of David, and Prince of peace. But so far is he from speaking of the angels in terms expressing equal dignity, that when he again introduces his first-begotten Son into the world, and speaks of him as coming with royal pomp to take possession of his

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, and speaks of him as coming with royal pomp to take possession of his

among men or angels; and quote 1 Pet. i. 12, 20, 21, supposing there in the same glorious appearance of the Father's presence in heaven, as there was upon earth, which hath properly speaking a right or a left-hand. But this I esteem no article of faith. Compare chap. viii. 1

[superior to angels] Some have, I think, very pretentiously imagined, that the apostle, in this and the next chapter, insists so much on Christ's superiority to angels, in order to take off the Jews from that angel worship to which they were greatly inclined. But it is evident the apostle does not speak expressly on that subject. It is more certain, therefore, that his intention was to rectify their ideas of our blessed Redeemer, as indeed their entertaining high and honourable conceptions of him would be of great importance to their holding fast the Christian profession. It is plain, the Jews considered the angels as concerned in the promulgation of their law, on which account they might be the more zealously attached to

it, and to this view there was a peculiar propriety in the apostle's labelling the argument he is here upon, namely, the superiority of our blessed Lord to all the angelic order.

[Thou art my Son] These words are taken from Psalm. ii. 7. I think it is evident (as others have observed) that this and the rest of the passages here quoted, must refer to Christ in their original sense, and in the strictest propriety of interpretation, otherwise the argument would be entirely inconclusive, for it might be replied, that supposing these passages to be applicable to Christ, they will not prove him to be superior to the angel, since they originally refer to David and others confessedly inferior to those celestial spirits. It might be easily proved that this second passage ages originally belong to the Messiah. Compare Acts. iv. 25 and 33

[Thou shalt be my Son] Mr. Pierce hath laboured largely to prove, that these words in their original and primary sense refer only to Christ

SECT

1.

Hcb

L. 6

kingdom, he saith, (Psal. xlv. 6.) And let all the Angels of God worship him. And accordingly he did actually demand their homage to him, as constituted their Lord and Sovereign, not only in regard to his originally superior glories, but in consideration of that fidelity and zeal with which he had discharged his important Terrand to our world. And concerning the angels he saith, (Psal. civ. 4) he maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire. He, who rules the winds and the lightnings, has his angels under equal command, and employs them with the strength of winds, and the rapidity of lightnings in his service.

8 But to the Son [he] speaks in a very different manner, and [saith] in those memorable words, which have an ultimate reference to Christ, (Psal. xlv. 6, 7) Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom, [is] a sceptre of righteousness. Thou hast in the most eminent decree, through the whole of thine administration, loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and hast taken the most effectual method to suppress it; therefore God, thy God and Father, hath anointed thee plentifully with the oil of gladness above thy associates. Thou art exalted to superior honours and happiness; so that none of thy brethren, none of the angels whom thou mayest, in any instance or degree have comprehended to join with thyself, and lead

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire

8 But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows

He maketh his angels winds] That is, saith Mr. Cradock, (Apost. Hist. p. 363) He, the Son, makes use of the angels as his Ministers, in producing storms and lightning according to his pleasure. But I would not change the signification of the pronoun, He, which returns here, without absolute necessity.—The rendering *angels winds*, is very agreeable to the original and the context.

Thy throne, O God, &c.] To render this, as some would do, God is thy throne, for ever and ever, that is, God will establish thy throne, (according to 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14, Psalm lxxix. 4) appears to me very unnatural.

Loved righteousness, hated iniquity] It may be objected that, as all the angels have maintained this character, consequently this can be no just reason for preferring Christ to them. But I think the

true sense is not so much that the angels are chargeable with mistakes, though not with moral evil, (1 Th. ii. 18. xv. 15.) as Mr. Pierce suggests, but rather that it refers to that unparalleled instance of the love of moral rectitude which Christ hath given in becoming a sacrifice for sin by his atonement, doing more than hath been ever done by any rational agent, towards displaying his love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity.

Above thy associates [messengers] It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of other countries; in reference to which it is that they are called his fellows or companions for (as others have observed,) if fellows do not signify equals, the quotation is nothing to the apostle's purpose.

10 And, thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

11 They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

in thy train, ~~and~~ pretend to compare with thee in glory ~~and~~ joy. Yea, as Divine, thou art fixed in thine eternal throne, ~~that~~ the whole created world may unite ~~in~~ prostrate homage before thee. And it is to him who presided, as is well known, over the Jewish nation, and received the tribute of praise which they paid to Jehovah their God, that those words are addressed, (Psal. cii. 27,) *Thou, Lord, from the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They, permanent as they seem, shall at length perish and wear out; but thou endurest in undecaying glory; yea all of them shall grow old like a garment, and as a mantle thou shalt fold them up, and <sup>12</sup> *they shall be changed; thou shalt remove them out of their place, and introduce a new scene of things, with as much ease as a prince lays aside one robe and puts on another, but thou art ever the same, and thy years shall not fail through everlasting ages, nor can thy perfections admit any possible diminution.**

*But not to insist on the manner in which men* <sup>13</sup> *have addressed their homage and their praises to him, even under the inspiration of an unerring spirit; let me refer you to another passage, in which the Father himself speaks to him under the character of his Son, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom; that you may take an idea of his grandeur from thence. For to which of the angels hath he ever said, Sit thou enthroned in glory at my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet, and give thee to trample upon the last and the proudest of them all?* The spirits of heaven expect no such honour as <sup>14</sup> *this; the noblest of them all esteems himself happy in an opportunity of worshipping this triumphant Lord, and ministring even to the least of his servants. Is it not a known and delightful truth? are they not indeed all ministring spirits, who officiate before the throne of God, and are sent out to attend on those who shall in-*

<sup>1</sup> Fold them up } For *fold*, Mr. Pierce *heaven and earth* here signifies, *government*, as indeed the phrase sometimes may, but I think not in this place.

# 14 *Reflections on the glory of Christ as superior to angels.*

SECT. *herit salvation?* and always willing to undertake the offices he shall assign them, for the safety and good of his people? And therefore far from thinking of them in any view of comparison with him, let us humbly adore him, for the benefits which by his authority and favour we daily receive from these benevolent creatures.

## IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn from this wonderful and delightful portion of scripture, how we are to conceive of our blessed Redeemer. Admirable contrast of characters! which might appear to our feeble reason, inconsistent, if faith did not teach us to reconcile them. Strange, that the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, by whom he made the worlds, should condescend by himself to purge our sins! That he, to whom God saith, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; that he, whom the angels are commanded to worship; that he, whose Divine throne is for ever and ever; that he, whom the church hath for successive ages adored as having founded the earth and formed the heavens, as in his original perfections and glories far more immutable than they, changing them as a vesture at his sovereign pleasure, that this great, this illustrious, this Divine Person, should have laid aside these robes of celestial light to array himself in mortal flesh; not only that he might reveal his Father's will, and speak to us in his name; but that he might redeem us to God by his blood? What shall we say? We will receive the message he brings us with all humble thankfulness, we will seek his favour with most earnest solicitude, we will congratulate his exaltation with loyal joy. O triumphant, transporting thought, that Jesus is enthroned above all heavens, that he is anointed with an unequalled effusion of the oil of gladness; with angels we will fall down and worship him as our Lord and our God. Our Hosannas shall proclaim it, that he is set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, and that God hath engaged to make his enemies his footstool. Angels minister before him with unwearied vigour, with inconceivable speed do they fly like flames of lightning from one end of the heaven to the other, from world to world, to execute his sacred commands. With delight do they minister to those whom he hath appointed heirs of salvation, nor do they neglect the youngest or meanest. Let us thankfully acknowledge the great Redeemer's goodness and care, in every kind of office we receive from them. And as our obligations to him are infinitely superior to theirs, let us emulate their fidelity, vigour, and zeal, in the steadiness and cheerfulness of our obedience; till we join them in services like their own, in that world

where they dwell, and to which if we approve ourselves his faithful servants, he will ere long give them a charge safely and joyfully to convey us.

## SECT. II.

*From what has been before said, the Apostle infers the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation; which in perfect consence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him, for wise and important reasons, particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God. Heb. II. 1, to the end.*

HEBREWS II. 1.  
THITHERFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

HEBREWS II. 1.  
SOMETHING we have said in the former section concerning the supreme dignity of our blessed Redeemer. And now give me leave, before I proceed to other arguments, which will naturally occur, to draw this obvious consequence from what I have already said: If he be so far superior to angels, we ought therefore to yield extraordinary attention to the things which we have heard by his authority; lest by any means we let [them] flow out of our minds, and lose the impression they once made upon us.

SECT II.  
Heb. II. 1.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward,

For if the Mosaic law, which was the word spoken by angels, b proclaiming it in the name and presence of Jehovah from mount Sinai, was stedfast, and confirmed by such awful sanctions, that every instance of wilful transgression and disobedience received, as its reward, a corresponding and severe vengeance, How shall we have any room to hope that we shall escape, neglecting so great and glorious a salvation as that which the gospel sets before us? A salvation, which having at its beginning been spoken by the Lord of angels himself, was confirmed to us by the certain report of them that heard [him]

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

\* We have heard.] Nothing can be more evidently weak than the argument drawn from hence, to prove that St. Paul was not the author of this epistle, because it was not by hearing only that he received the gospel. It is to be considered, that he speaks in the name of all to

whom he was writing, as well as his own, to render the instruction the more unexceptionable and the more forcible. Besides, that to hear any thing, signifies in general to be instructed in it. Angels? See Dr. Whitby's admirable note on this text.

# 16 Which was proclaimed not by angels, but by the Lord :

SECT. preach it with his own lips; The blessed God himself joining his own Divine and sacred testimony with theirs, both by enabling them to perform the most amazing signs and wonders, and various innumerable miracles, and endowing them in a rich abundance, with distributions of the Holy Spirit in its extraordinary operations, imparted in different degrees to different persons, according to his own sovereign will and pleasure.

5 And by these wonderful operations the superiority of Christ to angels is farther illustrated; for to angels, even the most exalted of them; he, that is, God, hath not subjected the world to come, nor ever intended that they should preside in the latest and best dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth, but to heaven, concerning which we now speak, as it is the great business of the author's life to promote its interests. But a certain [writer,] 5 For unto the angels, hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

But one in a

<sup>a</sup> Signs and wonders.] I think it is very needless to inquire curiously into the difference of each of these words, when it is usual by a Hebraism to express a great degree and variety of things of any kind, by heaping together a great many synonymous words.

<sup>b</sup> To angels he hath not subjected, &c.] Archbishop Tillotson thinks the meaning of this scripture is, that God did not empower the angels who delivered the law, to enforce it with clear and express promises of a future state, as Christ had enforced the gospel. See his Works Vol. III. p. 136. Dr. Barrow explains it of the Messiah making so great an alteration in the constitution of things, that it is represented by a new heaven and a new earth, (Isa. lvi. 17. & sim.) on which account it was called by the Jews, the world to come; a phrase which it is observable St. Paul only uses in this epistle to the Hebrews, as being familiar to them. Barrow's Works, Vol. II. p. 202. Others have argued from this text, that angels were possessed of certain authority and power in the world before Christ came, of which they were divested upon his appearance; and of those who have agreed in this general explication, some, (as Mr. Pierce,) have referred the presidence of angels to their having the guardianship of particular countries, and others, to some particular influences of their coun-

bels in projecting the scheme which preceded the display of the gospel. But it seems to me, that the simplest, plainest, and most unexceptionable sense is this, "That God had appointed his Son to preside in the last great dispensation; which he elsewhere expresses, by saying, 'He has united all things under him, as their common Head, Eph. i. 10'" and this certainly is an honour to which no angel can pretend. Dr. Burnet's explication of this as referring to the new heavens and earth, which he supposes shall succeed the conflagration in which Christ is to reign, (which he also thinks referred to Isa. ix. 6.) is so very precarious and improbable an interpretation, that I think it is hardly worth mentioning. Burnet's Theory of the Earth, Vol. II. p. 392.

<sup>c</sup> A certain [writer] bears his testimony.] It has been matter of much debate among critics, whether these words are to be considered as in their original intent, a prophecy of the Messiah, or a description of the dignity and glory of human nature, to which the apostle alludes; making use of David's language to clothe his own ideas, though by an application very different from his design. It seems evident to me, that there is nothing in the viii<sup>th</sup> psalm by which, independent upon the apostle's authority, it could be known to belong to the Messiah. On the whole, therefore, I prefer the latter opinion, though I re-

certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

well known, I am persuaded, to you Hebrews, *somewhere bears his testimony, saying, (Psal. viii. 4.) O Lord, what is man, that thou rememberest him, or the son of man that thou visitest him!* After which he goes on in words that have a most remarkable correspondence to the character and circumstances of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in his humbled and in his exalted state; for he adds, speaking of the Son of Man, *Thou hast made him but a little lower than the angels; with glory and honour hast thou crowned him, and hast constituted him [lord] over all the visible works of thine hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.* This may be interpreted in the widest extent; for in putting all things under him, nothing was left out, [which was] not represented as reduced to subjection to him. But now we do not as yet see, that all things are put under him, to whom we refer these words; but on the contrary, a great part of the world is as yet unacquainted with him and his authority. Nevertheless, we see what we may well look upon as an earnest and security of it; for we see Jesus, who, for the few years he dwelt upon earth, was made in human form and state a little lower than the angels of God, over whom he had an original right, as their Maker, to preside, exalted to the most conspicuous dignity in the celestial world: we see him, who was thus humbled for the suffering of death,<sup>f</sup> that he might be capable of it; and that by the grace of God to sinful creatures, he might taste the bitterness of death for every man, who would obediently accept of life through him, now crowned with a glory and honour far superior to what Adam had in the day in which he was created.

10. For it became Such hath been the conduct of God in this 10

dily confess, that if the former could be proved, it would establish a direct argument in words, which must otherwise be only understood as an allusion; but the grand truth to which they refer, the exaltation of Christ to supreme dignity, was so expressly asserted by himself, Mat. xxviii. 18. and was so fundamental a doctrine, and so universally received in the Christian church, that it did not seem to stand in need of such an additional proof.

<sup>f</sup> For the suffering of death.] These words may seem ambiguous, and capable of being referred either to the preceding or following clause. It is indeed true, that Christ was crowned as a reward for suffering death; as the apostle expressly teaches, Phil. ii. 8, 9. But the concluding words of the verse, which have plainly a connection with these, determine them to the former sense.

SECT.

II.

HEB.

II. 6.



# 18 Yet it became him to be made perfect through sufferings :

SECT. great affair of our redemption. And the beauty  
 11. and harmony of it will be apparent, in propor-  
 tion to the degree in which it is examined.  
 Heb. For though the Jews dream of a temporal Mes-  
 11. 10. siah, as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory,  
 it well becomes him, for whom [are] all things,  
 and by whom [are] all things, the glorious Being  
 who is the first cause and last end of all, in pur-  
 suit of the great and important design he had  
 formed, of conducting many whom he is pleas-  
 ed to adopt as his sons, to the possession of that  
 inheritance of glory he has intended for them,  
 to make and constitute Jesus his first-begotten  
 and best beloved Son, the Leader and Prince of  
 their salvation; and to make him perfect or com-  
 pletely fit for the full execution of his office, by  
 a long train of various and extreme sufferings,  
 whereby he was, as it were, solemnly conse-  
 crated to it.

11 Now, in consequence of this appointment, Je-  
 sus, the great Sanctifier, who engages and con-  
 secrates men to the service of God, and they  
 who are sanctified; that is, consecrated and intro-  
 duced to God with such acceptance, [are] all of  
 one family; all the descendants of Adam, and in  
 a sense the seed of Abraham; for which cause  
 he is not ashamed to call them whom he thus re-  
 deems and presents to Divine favour, his bre-

12 thren; Saying, (Psal. xxii. 22, 26.) in the  
 person of David, when representing the Messiah  
 in his sufferings and exaltation, I will declare  
 thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the as-  
 sembly of thy people, the great assembly, which  
 by way of eminence shall be called the church,  
 will I praise thee for thy gracious interposition

13 in my favour. And again, speaking as a mor-  
 tal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in  
 trials and difficulties as others were, he says in  
 a psalm which represents his triumph over his  
 enemies, I will trust in him, as other good men  
 have in all ages done; and again; elsewhere in  
 the person of Isaiah, (Isa. viii. 18.) Behold I and  
 the children which my God hath given me, are  
 for signs and for wonders. Seeing then those

11 For both he  
 that sanctifieth, and  
 they who are sancti-  
 fied, are all of one;  
 for which cause he is  
 not ashamed to call  
 them brethren,

12 Saying, I will  
 declare thy name un-  
 to my brethren, in  
 the midst of the  
 church will I sing  
 praise unto thee.

13 And again, I  
 will put my trust in  
 him. And again,  
 Behold, I, and the  
 children which God  
 hath given me.

14 Forasmuch

# It became him.] This seems to signi-  
 fy, not only that the course he took was  
 well worthy of God, but that in order to

act worthy of himself, it was expedient  
 he should take this method.

then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

whom he represents in one place and another as the children of the same family with himself, and partakers of human flesh and blood, he himself in like manner participated of them, and assumed all their sinless infirmities, that thereby he coming capable of those sufferings to which without such a union with flesh he could not have been obnoxious, he might by his own voluntary and meritorious death, abolish and dispose him, who by Divine permission had the empire of death, and led it in his train, when it made its first invasion on mankind, that is, the devil, the great artificer of mischief and destruction at the beginning the murderer of the human race, who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality which is his work, and who may often by God's righteous permission be the executioner of it. But Christ the great Prince of mercy and life, graciously interposed, that he might deliver those his miserable captives, who through fear of death were, or justly might have been, all their life time obnoxious to bondage, having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery. Whereas now changing their Lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life.

And which from why throne of death were all their life time subject to bondage.

And he himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

We the sinful children of Adam, though the heirs of death, are thus delivered by him, but not the infernal powers, who were the first authors of their seduction, for truly he took not hold of the angels to save them from plunging into the abyss of misery; but he took hold of the seed of Abraham, and hath made a gracious provision for the salvation of all who shall by true faith approve themselves the genuine children of that holy patriarch. From whence, and in consequence of which design, it behoved him to

Whence it behoved

The original word properly signifies to deprive of life. From whence, when applied to the Law, it signifies to take away. I suppose with Jacobus he signifies, that it chiefly means, that Christ might give mankind the hope of immortality, when they are delivered from the bondage of the Law, and

according to heaven, is, I think, making the interpretation a great deal too low. The empire of death. Some have inferred from hence, that the devil is the author of the sentence of death both on good and bad men. But I think the sense in the patriarch is less obvious and precise.

## 20 Reflections on the character of Christ as our High-Priest, &c.

SECT. *be made in all things like unto those whom he*  
 11. *condescends to call [his] brethren, that so he*  
 Heb. *might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest,*  
 11. 17. *in things [relating] to God, that he might in the*  
*most effectual manner make atonement for the in-*  
*firmities of the people.* Which he could not have done if  
 18 he had not assumed our nature. But now, in  
 consequence of that, he has not only provided  
 himself with something to offer, but has by the  
 experience of our infirmities, contracted that  
 peculiar kind of compassion, which nothing else  
 can teach; and in that he hath himself suffered,  
 being tempted and tried with such a variety of  
 assaults and sorrows, he can, in the most ready  
 and endearing, as well as effectual manner, help  
 those that are tempted, and are making their  
 way through those scenes of difficulty which he  
 passed through with such fortitude and honour.

### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse ETERNAL praise to our compassionate High-Priest, who put on  
 18 our infirmities that he might know how to pity and relieve  
 them! Eternal praise to him, by whom are all things, and for  
 whom are all things, that he has concerted the merciful scheme  
 10 of bringing many sons unto glory, in a manner so well worthy of  
 his Divine perfections, and so full of instruction and comfort to  
 us; appointing his own Son the Captain of our salvation, and mak-  
 ing him perfect through sufferings! Let us daily reflect upon it  
 11 with pleasure and gratitude, that he is not ashamed to call us his  
 16 brethren, though so highly exalted above the angels of God; and  
 that he took not hold of the superior nature of angels which was  
 sunk into apostacy, guilt, and ruin, but took hold on the seed of  
 Abraham. How venerable, as well as amiable, is that conde-  
 scension with which he made himself a little lower than the an-  
 gels, that by the grace of God which was to owe its highest hon-  
 ours to his cross, he might taste death for every man! He hath  
 effected his merciful purpose: by death he hath deposed and abo-  
 lished the tyrannical prince of death, that is the devil, and deli-  
 vered from the fears of death, those who, had they known and  
 considered their real circumstances, might have been continually  
 in bondage to it.

We see our great enemy deposed; we see life and immortality

\* Faithful High-Priest. Mr. Fleming  
 thinks this signifies the same as a ju-  
 stice, one worthy of our trust and confi-

dence; but the former implies the lat-  
 ter. Fleming's Chrystology, vol. II. p.  
 266.

*They ought to regard the High-priest of their profession ; 21*

brought to light by his gospel : let us see it with gratitude and pleasure. And let us learn from all, if we would not charge ourselves with the most inexcusable guilt, and the basest ingratitude, if we would not plunge ourselves into the lowest gulph of perdition, *not to neglect so great a salvation*. Let the doom, Verse which the law of Moses passed upon the presumptuous transgressor, deter us ; and let the grace of the gospel <sup>1</sup> here and in-<sup>2</sup> vite us to attend to the *salvation spoken by the Lord*, and to take <sup>1</sup> the most earnest heed to it, lest we let slip that golden opportunity, which, if neglected, will never return.

SECT. III.

*The Apostle farther takes occasion to manifest Christ, as superior to Moses, the great legislator of the Jews ; and begins to caution them from the sentence passed on the rebels against the authority of Moses, of the danger of despising the gospel promises. Heb. III. 1—13.*

HEBREWS III. 1.  
WHEREFORE, **W**HILE, ye holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus ;

HEBREWS III. 1.  
**I** HAVE just pointed out to you the Son of God, under the endearing character of a compassionate and faithful High Priest. And therefore suffer me to address you, my dear and holy brethren, whom he hath brought near to God, and graciously made partakers of the heavenly calling<sup>a</sup>, by which he animates his people to aspire to the noblest views and pursuits ; and let me intreat you frequently to direct your eyes and hearts to him : *attentively regard* this gracious Saviour, who hath condescended to become *the apostle* of God to us, that he might bring us the messages of his will, and who is also constituted the *High Priest of our profession*<sup>b</sup>, by whom our guilt is expiated, and our happiness secured

<sup>a</sup> *Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.* Mr. Pierce thinks, when they are called *holy brethren* by the apostle, it is in allusion to what was said of their *being sanctified*, chap. ii. 11: that when he speaks of their *calling*, he means their *being called his brethren* ; and that when he styles them *partakers of this calling*, it is to intimate that they do not *ingross* it. But all these interpretations seem to me more refined than solid. The *calling* generally signifies the *call* that is given us

by the gospel to pursue immortality and glory.

<sup>b</sup> *Apostle and High-Priest.* Both are properly mentioned, as the author was to show, that as an apostle, Christ was superior to Moses ; and as an *High Priest*, to Aaron. He is called an *Apostle* as sent from God with full commission for the important affair he came to transact. That *apostle* signifies messenger, see many places in the New Testament, cited Vol. II. sect. 162. notes.

SECT. III. even Christ Jesus, so well known to us under this great and honourable character. Let that illustrious person be daily familiar to your minds, even he who was faithful to him that appointed him to his office, as Moses [was] also faithful for all his house; according to that testimony with which God himself was pleased to honour him. (Numb. Xii. 7.) But I design not by applying these words, to insinuate, that there is room for a complete comparison between them.

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was, faithful in all his house.

3 On the contrary, it is very apparent, that as for him of whom I now speak, he was esteemed worthy of far more honour than Moses<sup>c</sup>, in proportion to the degree in which the builder of a house<sup>d</sup> hath more honour than the house itself. For Christ laid the plan of the Mosaic dispensation, and Moses who was himself his creature, evidently acted as his delegate in the revelation which he made to the people of Israel; so that whatever excellencies that dispensation can boast, they reflect an honour ultimately on the Divine Person from whom he received it.

3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house has some builder<sup>e</sup>, by whom its several parts were modelled, raised and disposed, and every thing well adjusted in it displays the skill of its Architect and Disposer; now he who built and adjusted all things [is] God, whose works of creation and providence are worthy their great Author, and proclaim that power, wisdom, and goodness, which

4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

<sup>c</sup> More honour than Moses.] As it was their attachment to the Mosaic law, and the writings of the Old Testament, that hindered so many Jews from embracing Christianity, it is with the utmost propriety of address that the apostle here undertakes to shew that Christ was superior to Moses, and by a necessary consequence, to the rest of the prophets and sacred authors, whom they acknowledged to be inferior to this great Prophet.

<sup>d</sup> Builder of a house.] Both Mr. Pyle and Dr. Whitby would render κατασκευαστα not to build, but to order, or govern, as the word house signifies not a building, but a family.

<sup>e</sup> Hath some builder.] So I think the words κατασκευαστας ενα τις may be rendered, the word man not being in the original, nor here being properly insert-

ed. Dr. Calamy has argued from hence the supreme Deity of Christ, in consequence of his being the Creator of all things. (Calamy on Trin. p. 44.) But Mr. Pierce pleads, that if it had been the intent of the apostle here to assert, that Christ was the Creator of all things, it would have been sufficient to have stopped here, and that what follows would sink the argument lower; therefore, he would translate it as the vulgar Latin does, *The builder of the house*, that is, the head and founder of the family, *has the greatest honour of any person in the house*; and by consequence they must have the next honour who are most nearly related to him. So Christ who is his Son must have greater honour than Moses, who was no more than a servant.

set him infinitely above the most excellent of creatures.

SECT. III.

5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken of after :

And that Christ is incomparably more to be honoured than Moses, appears even from this consideration, though inferior to the former, that *Moses [was] indeed faithful in all his house, as a servant*, who was appointed to act in an inferior œconomy, for a testimony of things afterwards to be mentioned ; the evangelical design of which we shall in some measure discuss in the following parts of this epistle, according to their relation and connection. But Christ was faithful in a far superior character, even as a *Son in his own house*,<sup>f</sup> that is, over the church, in which as heir of all things he hath not only a trust and office, but also a property, and which is appointed for him to inhabit and preside over ; whose house, his chosen and delightful habitation, we Christians now are, if we strenuously maintain [our] freedom of profession,<sup>g</sup> and boasting of hope, steadfast unto the end ; if having so glorious an hope set before us, in which we may justly boast as our greatest honour and happiness, we resolutely adhere to it, and permit nothing to wrest it out of our hands.

Heb. III. 5.

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house : whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

7 Wherefore, ye Holy Ghost saith, today, if ye will ear his voice,

And to this I am labouring to animate you, by the representation I have given of the dignity and glory of our blessed Saviour. Therefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, in a psalm which he dictated to David, (Psal. xcv. 7.) *To-day if ye will ever hear his voice at all, Harden not your hearts any longer ; lest you bring destruction upon yourselves, as your predecessors did, in the bitter provocation which they presumed to offer me in the day of temptation in the wilderness ; When your unbelieving fathers tempted me, and proved me, as if they would have made an experiment how much it was possible for me to bear ; and this, though they saw my works in such a variety of wonders, as passed in the wil-*

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

[In his own house.] Mr. Pierce brings many arguments to prove it should be in his house, that is, God's, in which sense the very words are used and translated before ; but as Christ is appointed the Heir of all things, the paraphrase cannot I think be contested. Compare Heb. x. 21.

[Our freedom of profession.] Some would render it, if we hold fast the confidence, even the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end, supposing it to refer to that confession which they made at their baptism with solemnity and joy.

24 *And not be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

SECT. derness in the course of forty succeeding years.

III. *Therefore I was angry with that perverse generation,*

Heb. *and said they always do and will err*

III. 10. *in [their] hearts; through their own obstinacy*

*and folly, and they have not known my ways,*

*nor paid any regard to the clearest discoveries of*

11 *my will and design; So that after repeated*

*abuses of my patience and long-suffering, I*

*swore in my wrath, and solemnly declared by*

*my own holy and majestic name, that they should*

*never enter into my rest;*<sup>b</sup> *but that the carcasses*

*of all that came adult out of Egypt, shall fall*

*in the wilderness, and that generation of men be*

12 *totally consumed. How awful a determination,*

*after all the hopes which such signal deliverances*

*had concurred to inspire! See to it therefore,*

*brethren, lest there ever be in any of you a wicked*

*heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from him who*

*still wears the same omnipotent terrors, and*

*continues, and will ever continue, the living and*

*true God, to whom you profess so great a re-*

*gard, and from whom you will indeed revolt, if*

*you give up the religion of Christ Jesus his Son.*

13 *You are surrounded with many temptations to*

*do this; but exhort one another daily, while you*

*are under this dispensation of grace, whilst it is*

*called to-day;*<sup>c</sup> *and the deserved judgments of*

*God are suspended, that no one of you may by*

*insensible degrees and artful insinuations, be*

*hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and its*

*fallacious advances on the mind; whereby if*

*you are not resolutely on your guard, you may*

*be seduced finally to forfeit the invaluable bles-*

*sings, which are so freely offered, and which*

*have so long been set before you.*

10 Wherefore I

was grieved with that

generation, and said,

They do always err

in their hearts; and

they have not known

my ways.

11 So I swore in

my wrath, They shall

not enter into my

rest.

12 Take heed, bre-

thren, lest there be

in any of you an evil

heart of unbelief, in

departing from the

living God.

13 But exhort one

another daily while

it is called To-day;

lest any of you be

hardened through the

deceitfulness of sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1. WE are partakers of this heavenly calling, and to us are the messages of mercy addressed: let us therefore hear with reverence and obedience, the admonitions of the word of God.

<sup>b</sup> My rest.] Canaan is so called, as they there reposed themselves after the labours of a long war, as well as the fatigues of a tedious march; and perhaps as entering upon a course of stated worship, it

might appear as a kind of sabbath keeping.

<sup>c</sup> Whilst it is called to-day.] I/Enfant thinks this refers to that patience which God still exercises towards a nation soon to be overwhelmed with his judgments.

Let us behold with veneration and delight, the Son of God becoming the Messenger of his Father's love, and the High Priest of our Christian profession. He is the great Prophet too, whom God hath raised up unto us like Moses, in many respects; but O how far superior to him! More completely, faithful to him *who hath appointed him; faithful as a son in his own house.* SECT. III. Ver. 2

The world is an edifice raised by Christ; the church is the house in which he delights to reside. Let both be considered in this important view. The Divine perfections of the great Architect are indeed illustriously displayed in the construction and constitution of this visible world. Does not the meanest house or cottage declare itself to be the work of some intelligent agent? And does it not much more evidently appear, that this commodious and magnificent structure must have been planned and reared by proportionable wisdom, grandeur and power?

It is the work of Christ; and let it often be devoutly surveyed and contemplated in this view; and from thence let us infer his Divine glories, and read in them his matchless condescension. Let us learn with how much security and delight we may commit our immortal souls to him who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and shall endure the same when they shall be dissolved and perish. Let us view him also as the Lord of the church; and consider the fabric of grace as raised to his honour; that in that as his temple, every one might speak of his glory; and let all the churches, and every member of each, make it their faithful care to honour him more and more.

In this view may we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope, stedfast unto the end, and never suffer any one to take our crown, or terrify, or allure us, from that faithful subjection of soul to Christ, which his perfections and our obligations to him, concur to demand. Who of us can say, he is beyond all danger of being ensnared by an evil heart of unbelief, of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Let us then, in compliance with so salutary and necessary an exhortation, redouble our guard; let us watch over ourselves and each other; exhorting one another daily, while it is called to-day, and charging our souls by the awful authority of the living God, that after having approached so near him, that after having so solemnly professed to devote ourselves to him, nothing may ever prevail upon us deliberately and wickedly to depart from him.



## S E C T. IV.

*The Apostle goes on to repeat the caution he had given against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression which he shews to refer to something much nobler than that rest, which the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages. Heb. III. 14.—IV. 11.*

## HEBREWS III. 14.

SECT.  
IV.  
Heb.  
III. 14.

**I** GIVE you such cautions to guard against the deceitfulness of sin, and an evil heart of unbelief, because I know your highest interests are concerned; *for we are made partakers* of the grace and mercy of Christ, and admitted by him into the family of God, *if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence* in him as our great Saviour, *stedfast unto the end* of our lives, whatever difficulties and oppositions may arise. Let us therefore be strenuous and incessant in this care; *forasmuch as it is said,*<sup>a</sup> in the passage I have quoted above, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as they did in the provocation which was offered to God in the wilderness.*<sup>b</sup> *For some of them who heard so many Divine messages solemnly declared, and the law spoken by the very mouth of God himself from mount Sinai, provoked [him] to indignation: but not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses:*<sup>c</sup> *there was a remnant 'hence,' as there*

HEBREWS III. 14.  
**F**OR we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.

15 While  
To-day, if  
hear his  
den not your  
as in the prom.

16 For some, when  
they had heard, did  
provoke: he  
not all that came  
out of Egypt.

<sup>a</sup> *Forasmuch, as it is said.*] The words *forasmuch as it is said* are something ambiguous, and may either signify, *forasmuch as it is said*, or *since it is said*; and if the latter version be preferred perhaps this 15th verse may be connected with the 13th. *Forget one another duty while it is called to-day, while it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice:* as if he had said, The matter is of so much importance, that it is not to be neglected so much as for a *single day*, lest the proper reason should be slighted. But as *eye*; <sup>a</sup>, a different phrase, was used for *while* in the 13th verse, I judge the rendering I have given most probable, and ventured it, in order to avoid an inconvenient length, by dividing the section as I have here done.

<sup>b</sup> *But not all they who came out of Egypt*] Mr. Pyle gives it a different and remarkable interpretation, making the former part of the verse an interrogation, *Who were they that when they heard, that is, heard the report of the spies, (Num. xiv.) did provoke him? Were not they all that came out of Egypt?* And this he supposes is a distinct argument for perseverance, taken from the infectious nature, as well as pernicious consequences of infidelity and apostasy. But had this been the sense, I think *eye* would have been used instead of *and*, especially as by this means the correspondence with the 17th verse would have been more evident.

<sup>c</sup> *There was a remnant.*] Joshua, Caleb, the women and children, and some

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom  
swore he that they  
should not enter into  
his rest, but to them  
that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

the fear, the pl  
nase ben, h' is of  
entering into merrit,  
... of you should  
seem to come short  
of it.

2 For *us*, *we* *come short* [of it.] For we are made partak-  
the gospel preached, *ers of the good tidings*<sup>f</sup> of the promised rest,

think, some of the Levites were not included in this sentence. Bishop Fell mentions this as an intimation, that all shall not apostatise in the worst times.

<sup>a</sup> *Let us therefore fear.*] The example, as has often been observed, is most suitable, being taken from their own ancestors, the evil being the same, namely, unbelief, the time resembling it just after the establishment of a new constitution, and the consequence the same, the exclusion from rest. The superior dignity of Christ above Moses, and the superior excellence of Heaven above Canaan, greatly confirm the force of the argument. Pierce on Heb. vi. 12, note <sup>a</sup>.

living and obedient souls, to whom  
of God shall be accomplished.

*And by whom was he provoked by a long succession of infidelity and folly for forty years? [was it] not with those who well deserved that displeasure? With those who sinned against him by suspecting his presence with them, after so many amazing and unparalleled demonstrations of it; whose carcasses, according to his awful pre-*

diction, *fell in the wilderness* during those years of wandering to which they were justly doomed? *And was there any thing in this that looks* 18 *like a breach of promise on the part of the blessed God? Far from it;—To whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but unto those who were so obstinate and disobedient, as entirely to forfeit all claim to his promise and favour? And when we come to con-* 19 *sider the cause of that disobedience, we see that it was owing to a secret infidelity with regard to the Divine power and goodness, either to preserve them in the wilderness, or conduct them into Canaan. So that I may say they could not possibly enter into the promised rest, because of unbelief: that was upon the whole, the evil that destroyed them. Let us therefore* IV. 1

improve so awful a dispensation of Providence to our own instruction, and fear,<sup>d</sup> lest a promise be now left [unto us] of entering into his most happy and glorious rest, any of us<sup>e</sup> should even at any time, so much as seem like to come short [of it.] For we are made partak-

\* Any of us.] Some copies read *ἡμεῖς*, us, instead of *ἐμὲν*, you; and their authority is evidently confirmed by the connection. See Dr. Mills in loc.

Parables of the good things } So I  
choose to render the word *καταλαλεῖν*.  
For, that we have the gospel (taking it  
for the message by Christ,) at least as  
well as these people had in the willow-  
ness, and indeed a great deal more plain-  
ly, is so evident, that it may seem but  
a very low sense of the words, and not  
worthy the wisdom and gravity of the  
apostle to insert it.

- as they also were. But the word of promise as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.
- which they heard, did not profit them, as it might otherwise have done, in matters of the highest importance, not being duly mixed and tempered with faith in them that heard [it]. For we cordially & liking the gospel, and faithfully retaining it, are so secure of final happiness, that it may with some propriety be said, we have already entered in'o rest; as he said, in the foregoing text, *So I swore in my wrath they should not enter into my rest.* And this may lead us farther to reflect on what is elsewhere said concerning his works, as they were finished from the foundation of the world.<sup>h</sup> For after Moses had given us an account of the creation, he nowhere saith concerning the seventh [day] thus, (Gen. ii. 2, Exod. xxxi. 17,) *And God rested the seventh day from all his works.* And in this [place] which we have quoted, again he saith, *[I have sworn] they shall not enter into my rest.* Now this certainly implies, that when these words were written, there was a rest of God, from which these sinners should be excluded, though they actually dwelt in the land of Canaan, secure under the protection of David, their victorious monarch, and enjoyed the repose of God's sabbath there.
- Seeing then it remaineth that some must enter into it, which is spoken of in this scripture as a certain thing, and they to whom the good tidings of rest were at first declared, did not enter because of their unbelief, which you know was threatened with such punishment, He again determineth a certain day, marked out within certain limits and boundaries, in reference to which he urges their immediate attention and obedience to the manifestation of the Divine will, saying in that well-known composition of

<sup>g</sup> *We believing have entered, &c.* ] Mr Pierce would render it, *We believing enter into rest*, that is, faith is the way by which men must expect to enter into whatever rest God promises in one age or another, and so it appears necessary that the word should be mixed with it. This, it must be acknowledged, is a very probable and weighty sense.

<sup>h</sup> *His works finished from the foundation, &c.* ] Mr Pierce thinks the apostle intends to lay in an answer to an objection which might arise against the caution given from their being entered into rest already, that is, into the land of Canaan where they celebrated the sabbath. He therefore shews that the words could neither extend to the one or the other of these rests.

day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

9 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

*David*, of which we have just been speaking. *This day*, and that *after so long a time* as had passed after the rest of God at the creation mentioned above, as it is said, *This day, ye will hear his voice*, at all, *harden not your hearts*.

Now it is certain, as I hinted above, the rest here referred to, is not, and cannot be, interpreted of the land of Canaan; for if Joshua, who introduced them thither, and settled them there, had given them the great and peaceful rest referred to, he would not so long after that settlement, have spoken, as you see in the days of David he does, concerning another day of trial, and another day of rest into which it was a sup-

9 posable case that they might not enter. *There-fore* it is very evident, that *there remaineth a rest* for the people of God; which, when we consider it in reference to that sabbatical rest of which we have been speaking, may properly be called the celebration of a sabbath, which, blessed be God, will be eternal. It may be thus 10 called with happy propriety, for he who hath entered into this, his final and complete rest, of which we now speak, hath also himself entirely ceased from all the labours and fatigues of his works, as God rested from his own on that first seventh day, which, in commemoration of it, was appointed sacred to future ages. Let us 11 therefore labour with all possible diligence and constancy, to enter into that important and eternal rest, that no one may finally fall into ruin by the same example of disobedience, which hath undone so many thousands already, and proved so fatal to Israel, in the instance I have been handling at large.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can be so desirable as to partake of Christ, and all the saving benefits, which believers receive in and by him, by virtue of that relation to which he condescends to admit them? Let us seek this happiness by persevering faith, and holding fast

[If Joshua.] So this proper name *Remaineth a rest.* He here changes should be rendered; for *Jesus*, is the word *ἡ σωτηρία*; for *σάββατος*, to only the Greek manner of expressing signify its being entire and perfect, and like a sabbath.

SECT.

IV.

Heb.

IV. 7.

Chap.

iii. 14.

sect. *the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; bearing still*  
 iv. *in our minds the melancholy example of the children of Israel,*  
 Verse *who though by such wonderful interpositions led out of Egypt,*  
 16 *were doomed by the Divine vengeance to die in the wilderness*  
*for their unbelief. That obstructed their entrance into Canaan:*  
 19 *nor can we ever hope to partake of the land of promise above,*  
*if we resign that faith, which is the spring of every other grace*  
*that is necessary to prepare us for it.*

Let us take the alarm, and exercise that pious fear which so  
 well consists with a cheerful hope in God, committing our souls  
 Chap. to his fatherly care: *We hear the word of salvation; let us pray*  
 IV. 1. *that it may profit us; and for that purpose, let us be often rea-*  
*lizing to our minds its Divine authority, and those invisible ob-*  
*jects which it opens upon us. It speaks of a rest remaining for*  
*the people of God; and O! how much nobler a rest, than that of*  
*Canaan. Our true Joshua leads us on, as the Captain of our sal-*  
*vation. He conquers all our spiritual enemies by his invincible*  
*word, and will divide us an inheritance, an everlasting inheritance*  
*there, if we are faithful to the death. To-day, after so long a*  
*time, are we still called to pursue it: let us therefore give dili-*  
 10 *gence, that we may enter: and let those sabbaths, which are in-*  
*stituted in kind commemoration of God's having rested on the*  
*seventh day from his labours, and which are intended in some*  
*degree to anticipate the heavenly rest, be improved for this va-*  
 5 *luable purpose. So shall we ere long rest from our works, as God*  
*did from his, and after the labours of these few mortal days,*  
*shall enjoy immortal tranquillity and repose: we shall pass a*  
*perpetual sabbath in those elevations of pure devotion, which*  
*the sublimest moments of our most sacred and happy days here*  
*can teach us but imperfectly to conceive.*

## SECT. V.

*The apostle enforces the caution he had before given, by awful*  
*views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations*  
*of the character of Christ, as our High Priest; of whose Di-*  
*vine appointment, gracious administration, and precious suffer-*  
*ing, he goes on to discourse, and promises farther illustrations*  
*of so important a topic. Heb. IV. 12, to the end, and V.*  
 1—14.

### HEBREWS IV. 12.

**H**AVING warned you against the fatal ex-  
 ample of unbelief, which we see in God's  
 Israel of old, let me entreat you to dwell upon  
 it, in your most serious and attentive reflections.

HEBREWS IV. 12.  
**F**OR the word of

God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the hearts.

For the word of God,<sup>a</sup> which gives you this account, as well as that glorious person his essential word, by whom he manifested himself to Israel in the wilderness, [is] still living and efficacious,<sup>b</sup> and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing in the acutest manner that can be imagined, even to the separating between the soul and spirit, the respective principles of animal and rational life, and to the dividing the remotest and most closely connected parts of the body; so that it reaches to the joints and even to the marrow,<sup>c</sup> contained in the bones. And, to speak in less figurative terms, as he [is] an exact discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, his word meets with the most secret purpose, and exerts a Divine authority, in controlling irregularities and disorders which no human eye can penetrate. And it may well be supposed that it should be so; for there is no creature, which is not apparent and manifested in his presence; but all things [are] naked, and laid bare<sup>d</sup> before the eyes of him to whom we are to give an account. He discerns them as the inwards of sacrificed animals are discerned, when their bodies are completely laid open, and therefore it will be altogether in vain to attempt a disguise before him.

seer.  
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Heb.  
IV. 12.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And it may well be supposed that it should be so; for there is no creature, which is not apparent and manifested in his presence; but all things [are] naked, and laid bare<sup>d</sup> before the eyes of him to whom we are to give an account. He discerns them as the inwards of sacrificed animals are discerned, when their bodies are completely laid open, and therefore it will be altogether in vain to attempt a disguise before him.

14 Seeing then Now on this consideration, and because the all-seeing God who is to be our final Judge,

<sup>a</sup> The word of God.] It is greatly debated among commentators, whether this is to be understood of Christ, or of the gospel and scripture revelation. I have endeavoured to give a hint of both senses in the paraphrase; but esteeming the latter preferable, have chiefly pointed that out; and I believe any one versed in the energy of scripture will think it a very suitable and natural sense.

<sup>b</sup> Living and efficacious.] Mr. Pierce thinks there is an allusion here to the lightning by which they fell in the wilderness, whom he had so often and so long been speaking of.

<sup>c</sup> Soul and spirit, joints and marrow.] There seems in this text an evident reference to the doctrine of two principles, called soul and spirit, as the seats of rational and sensitive life; to distinguish these seems to be spoken of, as an instance of the greatest penetration. Some have

explained it, as if he had said, he is able at pleasure to give a mortal wound; as when the marrow is separated from the joints; or the soul from the spirit, death ensues. But I rather think the meaning of the latter clause is, he can divide the joints, and divide the marrow, that is, enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce perhaps some sentiment which it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.

<sup>d</sup> Naked, and laid bare.] It has been well observed, that these two words contain a graceful allusion to the custom in sacrificing, of flaying off the skin from the victim, and cutting it open, whereby all the vitals and inwards are exposed to full view; as *naked* signifies what had no cover, and *laid bare* what had no concealment within. See Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 251.

SECT. V. has displayed his mercy in directing our eyes to a Saviour, by whose mediation we are to be delivered from the fierceness of his deserved vengeance; let us, I say, by such powerful considerations be awakened to have recourse to him, and encouraged to confide in him, and to adhere to his cause amidst all opposition. *Having therefore a great High Priest, who hath*

Heb.  
IV. 14.

that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession

15 from us. *For we have not an high priest incapable of sympathizing with our infirmities, but on the contrary, [one who] has a most tender feeling of them, having been himself tried in every respect, in like manner, [with us, yet] without any degree of sin, or any approach toward it, from which, amidst his severest trials, he*  
16 *remained perfectly free. Let us, therefore, humbly confiding in his intercession, approach with freedom of speech to the throne of grace, to present our petitions, that we may receive that mercy which he hath been appointed to purchase, and may find grace from that throne for our seasonable assistance, according to our respective necessities.*

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need

V. 1. I speak of Christ under the character of the great High Priest with evident propriety, to which I hope you will attend; *for every high priest taken from among men, as those of the Mosaic ritual are, is constituted or chosen for the benefit of men, and set over things which relate to the service and honour of God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins in*  
2 *an acceptable manner. Being able to proportion his compassion to those that are ignorant, and wandering from the exact paths of God's commandments, for whom alone, you know,*

V. 1 For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out

\* Every high priest] All the following discourse is intended to moderate their regards for the Levitical priesthood, and to give them more exalted notions of Christ, that they might be more resolute in adhering to him.

\* Proportio, "is compassion." So the word

μαρτυρίας properly signifies. The ignorant and erroneous is here put, by a usual figure, for those who wander, or sin, through ignorance; the case in which priests, appointed by men, were to offer sacrifices for them.

of the way: for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity:

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as we Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest: but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared;

sin-offerings are provided; because he himself also is incident to infirmity. And for this reason, it is necessary that he should offer an appointed expiatory sacrifice for sins on his own account, as well as for the people, and should make way for their sin-offering by the presentation of his own.

And this is so awful an office, that no man who has any regard to duty or safety, taketh it to himself: but he only wears it who is called of God for that purpose, as Aaron [was.] So Christ also, we well know, did not glorify himself to be made an high-priest: he did not aspire to, or seize upon this exalted office without a proper call; but he raised him to this conspicuous dignity, who said unto him, in the place quoted and pleaded above, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. As also in another [place,] which it will be proper to take very particular notice of, (Psalm cx. 4.) He saith to him whom he had called to sit on his right-hand, *Thou [art] a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec*.

Such a priest shall we presently see our great Redeemer to have been, even that compassionate Saviour, who in the days of his flesh, and while he sojourned here amidst the infirmities and calamities to which human nature is obnoxious, being assaulted with the utmost violence by the powers of darkness, offered repeated prayers and supplications, which were attended with humble prostrations, a strong cry and flowing tears, to him who was able to save him from death: and his supplications were not in vain; for though his heavenly Father did not think fit to exert that power in his total deliverance; yet he was heard in being delivered from that which he particularly feared<sup>1</sup>, and which

<sup>1</sup> Did not glorify himself, &c.] He did not assume the mediatorial office without a Divine authority, nor affect to appear before his time in the pomp and splendour of it.

<sup>2</sup> This day have I begotten thee ] This will by no means prove he was not a High Priest before his resurrection from the dead: and indeed if it signifies that his priesthood is to be dated only from

the day of his resurrection, not to mention the other absurdities of that supposition, it would, contrary to the judgment of those who bring it in this view, prove, that Christ was a Priest while he was upon earth, that is, during the period between his resurrection and ascension.

<sup>3</sup> From that which he particularly feared.] So I chose to render and explain the words; though Bishop Fell and some

SECT.

v.



SECT. threw him into such an agony in the garden,

v. that he sweat drops of blood. It is indeed a wonderful, but at the same time a very instructive dispensation, and therefore worthy of our deep consideration and reflection: that *though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience<sup>k</sup> by the things which he suffered*, and was trained up for more eminent services, by a series of painful

discipline. *And being thus consecrated to God<sup>l</sup>*

by his own blood, in virtue of which he was installed in his priestly office, *he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him*; to all that practically own his authority, as well as profess a dependence on his grace; being, as

10 we observed before, *Called and denominated of God an High Priest according to the order of*

11 *Melchisedec: Concerning whom* by the way, it is necessary that before we dismiss this argument, *we speak, having much discourse, and some of it perhaps hard to be understood*; not so much from the difficulty of the thing itself, as *because you are slow and sluggish of hearing*, and your minds are not awakened to that attention to these things, which might reasonably be expected from you: and especially as you are much prejudiced against every thing which may seem to lessen the glory of the Levitical priest-

12 hood: *For indeed, whereas you ought for the time that you have been under the instructions of the gospel, to have been qualified to be teachers of others, you are so attached to Jewish ceremonies and forms, that ye have need*

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered:

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach

others, taking *together* for a *mutual reverence of God*, (compare chap. xii. 28.) interpret it, as if it had been said, that *his prayer* rendered his prayer acceptable. Dr. Whitby has said so much to confute this sense, and establish the rendering in the paraphrase, that I need not add more, but refer to the note on Luke xxii. 42, (Vol. II. p. 453, note <sup>k</sup>.) for a further illustration of the general interpretation here given to this text.

<sup>k</sup> *Learned obedience &c.* He found he must suffer, and by one degree of suffering was better fitted for another. As Christ's human soul advanced gradually in knowledge, so also in the perfection of virtue, though always free from any de-

filicment of sin; and his patient and cheerful submission was improved by every trial.—But Dr. Whitby would render it, *he taught obedience to others by it*.

<sup>l</sup> *Being made perfect.* Archbishop Tillotson would translate it *having attained the end of his race through sufferings, that is, past through sufferings in his way to consummate glory.* (Compare John xix. 30; Luke xiii. 32; Heb. ii. 10.) But Dr. Jackson would render it, *being consecrated*, and is large in shewing how Christ might be said to be consecrated to his priestly office by his passion. Compare chap. vii. 29, ii. 10. See Dr. Jackson's Works, Tom. ii. Book ix. p. 913, &c. and Dr. Owen on chap. ii. 10.

you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

again that one should lead you back as it were to some of the first principles of religion, relating to the ends and purposes of Christ's dearth, and teach you what [are] the first initial elements of the Divine oracles; so that you may seem to be in a state of infancy as to these things, and are become persons who have need of milk, and not of strong food, such as suits a manly age and robust constitution. For every one who partaketh of milk, and subsists on that, without being able to digest strong food, [is] to be considered as unskillful in the word of righteousness,<sup>10</sup> that is in the gospel, which directs us in the true way of justification by the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer; for he is yet but an infant, and a compassionate regard must be paid to him under this view, in hope that he may hereafter attain to a superior sta-

sect.  
v.  
Heb.  
V. 12.

13 For every one that useth milk, is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

13 For every one that useth milk, is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. *For every one who partaketh of milk, and subsists on that, without being able to digest strong food, [is] to be considered as unskillful in the word of righteousness,*<sup>10</sup> that is in the gospel, which directs us in the true way of justification by the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer; for he is yet but an infant, and a compassionate regard must be paid to him under this view, in hope that he may hereafter attain to a superior sta-

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil.

14 But strong meat belongs to full grown men, who by long use and habit, have [their] senses exercised, so as to be able readily to distinguish between both good and evil; which if they cannot, there may indeed be danger of being imposed upon by that which would be unwholesome to their souls; though administered under the pretence of being fit to nourish them, and adapted to persons of most eminent attainments.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

MAY we all experience more of the efficacy of the Divine word upon our hearts. May we all be more and more thoughtful of the account we are to give up of ourselves to God; and of that perfect discerning which he has not only of our actions, but the secrets of our hearts; that we may never go about to conceal any thing from him, before whom all things are naked and open.

When we consider how many evils this all-penetrating eye hath discerned there, let it teach us to rejoice in that compassionate High Priest, who hath undertaken our cause; which could never succeed in any other hand. And let it embolden our petitions in humble expectation, that we shall not only receive that mercy, without which we perish, but grace to strengthen and

<sup>10</sup> Word of righteousness.] This phrase Mr. Pierce explains by referring to the passages of the Old Testament, which speak of justification by faith, quoted in

the epistle to the Romans and Galatians, which these Hebrews might seem to overlook. U'Entant explains them much in the same sense.

## 36. *The apostle would dismiss the first principles of Christ,*

SECT. V. help us in proportion to all our necessities. And when pressed  
 Ver. 16 with temptations, let it revive us to recollect, that he was in all  
 15 points tempted as we are, so far as it was consistent with the  
 perfect innocence which his office required, and which always  
 gained new lustre by every attempt of the enemy to obscure  
 and pollute it.

Let inferior ministers in God's sanctuary learn to imitate him;  
 Chap. and being themselves compassed with so many infirmities, he  
 v. 2. compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.  
 And under a sense of our common weakness, let us all be ear-  
 nest in our applications to the throne of grace for help. "If  
 7 Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, poured out supplications  
 with strong crying and tears, let none of us imagine we can be  
 safe in the neglect of prayer, or that we are ever to despond in  
 any circumstances which leave room for devout ejaculations to  
 God. Still he lives, who is able to save from death, and who can  
 also hear us in that which we tear.

8 Let us wisely prepare for afflictions. If Christ, though a Son,  
 learned obedience by sufferings, how much more do we need the  
 salutary lessons they teach. But let no sufferings prevent our  
 adhering to him, who being consecrated by them to so high an  
 office is become the author of salvation, of eternal salvation, to  
 9 his faithful followers. Let it ever be remembered, that it is to  
 them that obey him, that this salvation is promised: may we be  
 found in their number; and being entered as obedient disciples  
 11, 12 into his school, may we become proficient there; not such dull  
 and forgetful scholars, as need to be led back daily to the first  
 elements and first principles of the Divine oracles, not babes in  
 Christ, and unskilful in the word of righteousness; but such as  
 having our senses spiritually exercised to discern good and evil,  
 14 may be capable of receiving and digesting strong meat, and may  
 thereby grow stronger and stronger.

## S E C T. VI.

*The Apostle declares his resolution of advancing to sublimer  
 truths without dwelling farther upon the first principles, for  
 the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity;  
 and whose case he represents as very hopeless, Heb. VI.  
 1—9.*

### HEBREWS VI. 1.

SECT. VI. WE have had reason to complain that too  
 many of you are but in an infant state;  
 yet I know, that as I intimated before, there  
 are some among you, who can bear stronger  
 food than the state of babes will admit: to such I

### HEBREWS VI. 1.

THEREFORE,

leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God.

would shew some regard. *Dismissing therefore any farther discourse on the first principles<sup>a</sup> [of the doctrine] of Christ, let us be carried on to perfection, and pursue more eminent degrees of improvement in it, and more advanced and elevated knowledge: not laying again the first foundation of Christianity, by inculcating the well-known necessity of repentance from dead works, from the practices of those who are dead in sin, and whereby the soul is defiled, as the priests of God were by the touch of a dead body; nor insisting on the importance of faith in the one living and true God, as the universal Lord of all; Nor leading you back to the doctrine of baptisms,<sup>b</sup> those instituted under the Mosaic dispensation to inculcate moral purity on all who would draw near to God with acceptance; or that appointed by Christ, as the rite by which we enter into his church. And we will not now treat of the imposition of hands,<sup>c</sup> by which the*

SECT.

VI.

Heb.

VI. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands;

<sup>a</sup> *First principles.*] Mr. Pierce understands all that follows as referring to the Jewish doctrines, which might be considered as the elements of the Christian. *Repentance from dead works*, that is, from sin, was a Jewish doctrine, and he thinks it had a peculiar reference to that solemn and public repentance on the day of atonement. *Faith towards God*, he considers as without any regard to the Messiah. The *baptisms* he takes for the Jewish washings, observing that *βαπτισμοι* in the plural number is never used in any other sense. *Laying on of hands*, he takes for the rite that attended sacrifices; and imagines that the *resurrection of the dead*, and *eternal judgment*, are either to be understood as principles common to Judaism and Christianity, or rather peculiar to the former; in which view, the *resurrection of the dead* refers either to the *resurrection* of particular persons under the Old Testament in confirmation of the Divine mission of the prophets, (which might in the nature of things render the doctrine of Christ's resurrection more credible to those who believed these,) or the *resurrection of the Jewish people from Egypt*, or deliverance from any other great extremity. Compare Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. And the latter, that is, *eternal judgment*, he thinks may be explained of dreadful judgments inflicted of

old, as upon the sinners of the old world, the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. I thought it not improper to propose so remarkable an interpretation, but not seeing any reason for confining several of the clauses to so contracted a sense, I have taken them in a much larger extent.

<sup>b</sup> *Of baptisms.*] Lord Barrington understands this of the *baptism of water*, and the *effusion of the Holy Spirit*, by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles were initiated. He also explains the *laying on of hands*, as referring to the immediate communication of *spiritual gifts* by means of the apostles. These he thinks were *first principles*, as *baptism* was the first entrance into the church, and *laying on of hands*, the great evidence of it, as *faith and repentance* are the substance of Christianity, and a *resurrection and eternal judgment* the great motives leading men to embrace it. Bar. Mis. Ess. II. p. 116.

<sup>c</sup> *The imposition of hands.*] This answered such great purposes in the Christian church, as the appointed method of communicating important gifts, that it might well be mentioned among *first principles*.—But it is by a very precarious consequence, that any can infer from hence the universal obligation of this rite, in admitting persons into full church-

SECT. Spirit hath been communicated to those that <sup>and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.</sup>  
 vi. have embraced the gospel, *and of the resurrection of the dead*, which though not so clearly

Heb. VI. 2. and fully revealed, was assuredly believed by the Jewish Church before our Lord's appearance; *and of eternal judgment*, when the whole world shall be convened before Christ, and each of its inhabitants fixed by his final sentence in an unalterable eternity.

3 These are indeed important doctrines, and it will become you constantly to bear them in mind. But while I am addressing you at present, it may be more profitable for me to lead you into some higher improvements in Christian knowledge, and to build some farther Divine instruction upon these sure and solid foundations. *And this we will do, if God permit*; if God may assist us in attempting it, and this letter reach you, as I trust it will, while you continue your adherence to the Christian faith.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

4 As for those who seem to have forgot these sacred principles, and put the greatest slight upon them, by renouncing our holy religion, I give them up as persons from whom I have no farther expectations; *for [it is] in a manner impossible*<sup>a</sup> to succeed in any charitable endeavour *with regard to those who have once been enlightened* with the knowledge of such glorious truths as are essential to Christianity, *and have tasted of the heavenly gift* which our exalted Redeemer hath shed down upon us, *and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost*<sup>c</sup> in his miraculous

<sup>a</sup> For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

membership, or even to the ministry. See Pierce's Vindicat. p. 463.

<sup>a</sup> For it is impossible.] This text has been the subject of great debate, which I must not by any means enter into here. Compare Limb. Theol. 5. lxxxiv. 10—19: Baxter's Work, Vol. II. p. 305.—As to the phrase *enlightened*, it is certain, the ancient fathers early used it to express *baptism*. But in this view I much question the propriety of the phrase, and think that *illumination*, as well as *regeneration*, in the most important and scriptural sense of the words, were regularly to *precede* the administration of that ordinance. And I think that what the Papists, and some too ready to follow them, have

taught of an extraordinary illumination following the administration of the ordinance of *baptism*, is very enthusiastical, and absolutely destitute of proof.

<sup>c</sup> Heavenly gifts—partakers of the Holy Ghost.] Though by *heavenly gift*, Archbishop Tillotson (Vol. II. p. 485,) understands *remission of sin*, urging Rom. v. 15.—18, in proof of it; and distinguishes it from the communication of the *Holy Ghost*, and this too, as he ventures to assert, in its sanctifying power and influence; I see no necessity for making such a distinction, or extending in this place the energy of the Spirit beyond his extraordinary gifts. Bishop Hopkins quotes Acts viii. 15, (which he thinks, must in-

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to

and amazing communications. *And have tasted by some affectionate impressions on their minds, the efficacy of the good word of God, and felt something of the powers of the world to come,*<sup>1</sup> awakening in them a conviction of sin, and some desires after holiness, and resolutions in favour of it: I say, that as for such persons, *if, after all this, they totally fall away*<sup>2</sup> from Christianity, their case is in a manner desperate, and it is impossible again to renew the good impressions made on them, so as to bring them back to repentance, and to recover them to a sense of duty; since they reject the strongest evidence that can be conceived, and do, as it were, by this apostacy and blasphemy of theirs, so far as in them lies, *crucify to themselves the son of God again,*<sup>3</sup> and make an open example [of him:]<sup>4</sup> b, renouncing that Divine doctrine which hath been so gloriously demonstrated to them, they do in effect declare they look on Jesus as an impostor, who deserved what he met with; and they seem to ascribe the miraculous energy of the Spirit to some diabolical agency: which Christ himself represented as the sin that should never be forgiven. (Compare Mat. xii. 30, 31.)

SECT.  
VI.  
Heb.  
Yt. 3.

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again, unto repentance; saying they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

clude Simon Magus,<sup>5</sup> as a proof, that *unregenerate* men might receive the Holy Ghost. Hopkins's Works, p. 320.

<sup>1</sup> *The powers of the world to come.* This phrase is ambiguous. Some understand it of those miraculous powers with which the gospel-age, (called *the world to come* elsewhere, and particularly chap. ii. 5,) should be attended.—But if the preceding clause be explained as above, it will diversify the sense more, to understand this of impressions made relating to the importance of a future state. And as we so often read of *this world and the present world*; the invisible state into which we pass by death, may certainly with great propriety be expressed by the phrase *of the world to come*; as indeed that is its common signification. But if any on the whole think it is more reasonable to interpret this clause in the former sense, and so will understand the other clauses, as explained in the former part of note <sup>2</sup>, it must be observed, that the apostle, in thus giving judgment upon the case, if it should happen, does not declare that it actually does.

<sup>2</sup> *If they totally fall away.* It is certain the words *fall away*, must be understood thus: or it would prove, contrary to the plainest fact, that it is impossible to recover Christians who have fallen into great and wilful sins.

<sup>3</sup> *Crucify to themselves, &c.* Some would interpret it, *so far as in them lies they do it*, that is, they pour all the contempt upon Christ in their power, and offer all the injury to him they can; and were he upon earth, and subject to the violence he once suffered, they would treat him as his worst enemies did.—It seems to me that the apostle here gives up apostates, as hopeless in the general, in order to fortify Christians against the great danger to which they were exposed. But I think it cannot be inferred from hence, that, in ages where the evidence of Christianity might be less plainly demonstrative, those who had fallen into this crime with circumstances less aggravated, and professed repentance, were never to be received to the peace of the church, any more; as the Donatists supposed, and on this text founded their inexorably rigorous discipline.

SECT.

VI.

Heb.

VI. 7.

We will therefore, without any farther efforts for the recovery of such, leave them to the awful sentence which he hath pronounced upon them. *For whereas the earth that drinketh in the rain, which often cometh upon it, and produceth herbage for them by whom it is cultivated, partaketh of the Divine blessing, and wears a pleasant and delightful face; so shall those souls, who improve gospel-ordinances and Christian knowledge so as to produce the fruits of holiness, be favourably accepted of God, and feel a Divine joy in themselves. But as that ground which bringeth forth only thorns and briars, under the same cultivation, and the same refreshing showers, [is] rejected as utterly useless; so likewise shall the unfruitful soul be deserted by God in righteous displeasure, and is near to that dreadful hour, when a curse shall come upon it never to be revoked. And as such a barren soil, whose case we have been describing, is at last burnt up by the violent heat of the sun, and becomes dry heath;<sup>i</sup> so the end of such an unhappy creature [shall be] everlasting burning, in that miserable world, where all the means of grace and influences of the Spirit of God shall be for ever withdrawn, and the soul shall be given up to incurable wickedness, and eternal anguish. Such is the case of these wretched apostates; but I will enlarge no farther on this awful subject; for we are persuaded there is room to hope much better things of you, my beloved brethren, even things that accompany salvation, and do, as it were, bring it along with them: we have this cheerful expectation concerning you, though we think ourselves obliged thus to speak; that nothing in our power may be wanting to guard you against the greatest danger.*

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

2. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.

5 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse IN every respect, both with regard to knowledge and practice,  
1, 2 let us go on to perfection: and if we cannot attain to it, let us rise as near it as we can! For this purpose, as Christians, let us

<sup>i</sup> Dry heath.] *Heath* is the emblem of the cursed man. Jerem. xvii 6. See Dr. Whitby in loc.

remember what foundation has been already laid, of *repentance* SECT.  
and *faith*, of *baptism*, of a *resurrection*, and a *future judgment* ; VI.  
a judgment, eternal in its consequences, and therefore infinitely  
important. And let us remember, that as the building, in its  
highest advances, rests upon the foundation, and owes its stabi-  
lity to its union with it, so in like manner does our progress and  
advance in Christian piety stand in a near connection with our  
retaining these truths, though we by no means confine ourselves  
to them.

It is *eg* a continual care to improve in them, that we shall Ver. 4  
most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of apostasy,  
to which we may otherwise be exposed. And O! let the awful  
passage before us be duly attended to in this view! Let us not  
rest in any enlightening we may have received, in any taste we  
may have had of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, or  
the powers of the world to come, nor in any operation of the  
Spirit of God upon our minds, to form them to the most splendid  
talents, and qualify us for the most pompous external services.  
Men may have all these, and yet fall away, and their guilt be-  
come more aggravated: they may injure the Redeemer so much  
the more in proportion to all they have known of him: and in-  
deed will be capable of wounding him the deeper by their apos-  
tasy, and of exposing him to greater infamy. Let us daily pray  
to be delivered from so great an evil! We are not left to be  
like a *barren wilderness*; *the ruin from on high comes often upon* 7  
*us*, and we enjoy the choicest cultivation: may we *bring forth*  
*fruits meet for him by whom we are dressed*, the genuine fruits  
of practical vital religion. So shall we *receive a blessing from*  
*God*, and flourish more and more, till we are transplanted to the  
paradise above.

But as for those unhappy creatures who still continue to bring 8  
forth briars and thorns, let them dread that final rejection which  
will be the portion of those who persist in abusing the Divine  
goodness; let them dread the curse, the awful, the irrevocable  
curse, to be pronounced on such; let them dread the everlasting  
dearth with which their souls shall be parched, when ordinances,  
when the workings of the Spirit of God, when the common com-  
forts and supports of this mortal animal life, shall be no more.  
Gladly do the ministers of Christ entertain better hopes concern- 9  
ing those committed to their care, while yet there is room for  
hope, though faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men,  
obliges them to speak in the language of such cautions as these.  
May Divine grace apply it to those who are particularly concern-  
ed in it, and plant what hath hitherto been a barren and aban-  
doned desert, with such fruits of holiness, as may transform it  
into the garden of the Lord.



## SECT. VII.

*Addressing himself to sincere believers, the Apostle comforts them with a view of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to those sacred engagements into which he hath condescended to enter: the performance of which is further sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our forerunner. Heb. VI. 10, to the end.*

## HEBREWS VI. 10.

SECT.

VII.

Heb.

VI. 10.

**I** JUST now mentioned my hopes of your complete salvation; and I have reason to entertain such hopes, as well knowing the benevolent and pious dispositions which many of you have expressed. *For God [is] not unrighteous, or unmindful of his gracious promises, so as to forget your diligent work and labour in his service, animated by a principle of unfeigned love, which you have manifested, not only to your brethren, but to his name also, in having ministered, and in still ministering, as his providence gives you opportunity, to the necessities of the saints. And we heartily wish that this temper were as universal as it is commendable where it prevails; so that every one of you, into whose hands this epistle may come, might shew the same diligence, and exert the same studious care, in order to establish the full assurance of your hope, even unto the end of your Christian course; by which hope you must still be supported, while in this*

*12 world: That so on the whole you may not be sluggish and indolent, but imitators of those, who, through the exercise of faith and long-suffering, do now reap the blessed fruit of these graces, and inherit the promises\* which God hath made to support and cherish them in the hearts of his people through every age.*

*13 And a glorious confirmation you will find*

## HEBREWS VI. 10.

**F**OR God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister

*11 And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

*12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*13 For when God*

\* *Through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises.* Mr. Pierce explains this of the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity. If it be intended as a hint to stir up the Jews to emulation, as he supposes, it is indeed a very obscure one; for comparatively it is a low sense, in which Christians in this imperfect state can be said to inherit the promises. I rather

think it refers to all good men, who were departed out of our world, whether in former or latter days, and under whatever dispensation they died. — Taking it in this view, it will be (as several have observed,) an argument against the soul's continuing in a state of sleep during the intermediate period between death and the resurrection.

made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

these promises to be, when you come to compare one spiritual object with another, and are better skilled in the method of interpreting the sacred oracles, on principles which I am going to lay down. For I may in the first place lead you to observe, that when God made the great and comprehensive promise to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 2, 3, and xvii. 1—6.) on which so much of our hope as Christians doth also depend, the promise that he would be a God to him, and that all nations should be blessed in his seed; seeing he had no greater [a person] to swear by, he swore by himself, even by the honours of his own sacred and Divine name; saying, by an

1. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.

audible voice from heaven when he repeated the promise, while Abraham stood with Isaac before that altar on which with humble submission to the Divine appointment he had just before laid him, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that blessing I will assuredly bless thee, and multiplying I will assuredly multiply thee; I will bless and multiply thee remarkably, so as to make thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which

And so after I patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

is upon the sea-shore.” And thus having waited long in humble faith and patience, he obtained in due time the accomplishment of the promise, first in the birth of Isaac, and then, after a much longer attendance, the consummation of a better hope. And we whose circumstances so happily resemble his in this respect, may well follow the example of his faith, when we survey the foundation of it. For men truly swear by a [being] greater than themselves, to whom they ascribe that knowledge and power which is supposed to render him the object of their veneration and worship; and an oath, when

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for con-

1. Multiplying, I will multiply thee.] That part of the promise to Abraham which immediately follows the clause here quoted, in Gen. xii. 17, most certainly relates to the Gentiles; and therefore had the apostle intended ver. 12. of this chapter in the sense in which Mr. Pierce ex-

plains it, of the Gentiles converted to Christianity, I cannot think he would have stopped short at multiplying I will multiply thee, and omitted what follows, of making his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore, and—in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

- SECT. thus taken for confirmation [is] to them an end of all farther strife and contention. On which  
 VII. account the blessed God, in humble condescension to our infirmities, being willing in the most  
 Heb. abundant manner to manifest to the heirs of the promise, the immutability of his counsel, and his determinate resolution of bestowing upon them the blessings he engaged, interposed with the solemnity of an oath, That by two immutable things, in each of which [it is] impossible for God to lie, even his word and his oath, we might have strong consolation, even we who in humble obedience to the gracious designs of his gospel, have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope laid before us, the noble prize which that gospel proposes as the great object of our ambition and  
 18 pursuit; I speak of eternal life, the hope of which through the Divine goodness we have, and I trust we shall resolutely retain it, as an anchor of the soul, both secure and stedfast, and as entering into the place within the vail, the holy of holies, where God dwells, and where we hope  
 19 to dwell for ever with him. This anchor will indeed be sufficient to enable us to outride all the storms of temptation, being fixed in that glorious, though invisible world, whither Jesus as the Forerunner is entered for us, to take possession of glory in our name, and prepare all things necessary for our admittance into it: even he, [who is] made an High Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec; as we are going more largely to show.
- 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:
- 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.
- 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,
- 20 Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

## IMPROVEMENT.

- Ver. 10. WITH what amazing condescension doth God, by his apostles, speak of those works and labours of love, which the persons who have performed them with the greatest simplicity of heart, know to be most undeserving of his regard! How kindly hath he made himself a debtor to us, or rather to his own promise and oath, so that it would indeed be unrighteous in him to fail the expectations which nothing in ourselves could possibly raise! Let us then be animated to the greatest diligence, by a full assurance  
 11 of hope. There are those who inherit the promises, of which we are the heirs, and they have passed to that glorious inheritance by  
 12 the exercise of faith and patience. Let us chide our sluggish souls into a more resolute imitation of them. And when they

are ready to sink into indolence again, let us again awaken them by viewing those promises, and the fidelity of that God who hath made them, and who hath added, by a condescension that can never be sufficiently acknowledged and adored, the sanction of his oath to that of his word. Behold the strong consolation which he hath given. And given to whom? To those who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. Thither let us fly for our lives; fly, as if we heard the footsteps of the avenger of blood just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of the present moment. Happy the souls that have found this refuge! Whose faith and hope, like a strong and steady anchor, hath entered into heaven, hath fixed on that blessed Redeemer who lives and reigns there, who appears as an Intercessor for his people, and intercedes with such efficacy and success, that he is also to be regarded as their Forerunner, as gone to prepare a place for them. Let us constantly retain that view of him; and while we continue exposed to all the labours and sorrows of mortality, let us seek our safety and our comfort by fixing our regards upon him, waiting continually the aids of his grace, till he shall see fit to call us to fill the place he hath provided, and receive the inheritance he hath secured for us.

# SECT. VIII.

*The apostle enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from various respects, in which the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood, infers also the superior glory of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. VII. 1--17.*

HEBREWS VII. 1.

FOR this Melchisedec king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who

HEBREWS VII. 1.

I HAVE again and again mentioned that scripture in which the Messiah is spoken of in prophecy, as made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Now I think, it may be worth our while to dwell a little more intently on the contemplation of this subject; and then we shall find, that without straining the allegory, it holds in a variety of instructive particulars; for this Melchisedec, of whom Moses speaks in that celebrated history, (Gen. xiv. 18, &c.) to which David refers, [was] king of Salem, and priest of the most high God: in both which offices he was a remarkable type of our blessed Lord. And it is well known, he was the celebrated and holy person who met that illustrious

SECT. VIII.

SECT. patriarch, our father *Abraham*, when returning met Abraham re-  
 VIII. from the slaughter of the kings, who had taken turning from the  
 Heb. Lot prisoner, with the king of Sodom, Gomor- slaughter of the  
 VII. 1. rali, and the neighbouring cities of the plain. him :

And we are expressly told, that he *blessed him* on this occasion, that is, he pronounced on Abraham himself a blessing in the name of God to whom he ministered. *To whom also Abraham divided the tenth\* of all the spoils he had brought back*, in token of his reverence to the office he bore. And indeed when we come to consider his name and title according to the signification of it in the Hebrew language, we shall find it bear a remarkable analogy to that of our Lord Jesus Christ: for *first*, his name *Melchisedec*, being interpreted, signifies that he [is] *King of righteousness*, or a most righteous sovereign; and *then*, his title taken from the place where he resided and ruled, is *King of Salem*, that is, *King of Peace*; for it is well known, that Salem in the Hebrew tongue is peace, as Melch is King, Tsedec righteousness.

Now if we come to compare this Melchisedec, this king of righteousness and peace, with the Mosaic priests, we shall find a remarkable difference in many respects, in all which there is a resemblance between him and our Lord. For instance, whereas it is necessary the Jewish priests should all be of the family of Aaron, and there are several laws concerning the descent and qualities of their mothers, which must be observed and recorded, in order to make out their legitimacy, and their consequent right to serve at the altar, Melchisedec is, as it were, *without father*, and *without mother*,<sup>b</sup> neither his

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace:

3 Without father, without mother.

\* *Abraham divided the tenth.*] The objection which Mr. Chubb has brought against this from Gen. xiv. 23. as if it were Melchisedec who paid tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchisedec, is really trifling; a change of person, without express notice given of it, being usual in the sacred scriptures, and in all writers, and languages; not to observe, that the version of the Seventy, in the common editions, and in that copy which is printed in the polyglot, instead of *He*, expressly reads *Abraham*. But Mr. Chubb's particular exceptions have been

so abundantly answered by the author of *The case of Abraham and Melchisedec*, Jacob and Esau, &c. considered, published anno 1746, against Chubb's four dissertations, that I need not particularly enlarge. This may however be a proper place to observe, that the relative in it evidently refer to the antecedent in the following passages, Luke xvii. 16. Acts xiii. 23. 2 Kings xviii. 29. Psal. cv. 37. Acts vii. 5. Deut. xxxi. 22, 23. Gen. xiv. 20, &c.

<sup>b</sup> *Without father, without mother.*] It has been observed by many, and it is not

without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

father nor his mother are mentioned in scripture; and he is *without pedigree*,<sup>c</sup> or any written account of his genealogy, by which it may be traced up to more distant progenitors of the priestly order; and herein he answers to Christ, who with respect to his human nature, had no father, nor any mother with regard to his divine. Again, as there was a certain age at which the Jewish priests entered upon their ministry in the tabernacle or temple, and at which they quitted it, Melchisedec, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life*, mentioned in scripture, *but being in that respect as if he were immortal*, and therein *made like to the Son of God*, who existed before all worlds, *he remaineth a priest for ever*.<sup>d</sup>

SECT. VIII.  
Heb VII.

4 Now consider a great this man, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Now, I doubt not, my brethren, but that as I proceed in this argument, *you see and reflect, how great a man this Melchisedec [was] to whom, as I hinted above, even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of all the spoils he had recovered from the king of Shinar and his allies. And this will be farther illustrated, by consider-* 5 *ing that truly they of the descendants of Levi who receive the Aaronical priesthood, have according to the law by which they are constituted, a commandment; and in consequence of that, a right*

unfit to be a priest should be reminded of it here, that several ancient writers of character among the heathens, speak of persons, being *born of no father*, or *without a father*, when they mean only to express by it that their father was unknown. See Harris on the Messiah, Sermon ix. p. 262. Elsner likewise (Observ. Sacr. Vol. II, p. 347.) hath some remarkable quotations to shew that it was usual among the Greeks, to say of a person that he was *andros, agennetos, without father, without mother*; when his parents were unknown. And accordingly several of the fathers imagine, that this is here asserted of Melchisedec, because there is no mention made of his parents in the sacred scriptures. But the reason, in Elsner's opinion is, that there is no trace of his parentage in the sacerdotal genealogies, he being without priestly descent, *agennetos*, as it immediately follows, *not enrolled among the priests*.

<sup>c</sup> *Without pedigree.* As the genealogy of our Lord is so distinctly delivered both

by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, there may seem here to be a failure in the resemblance; I therefore added the words which determine it to the idea of some priestly ancestors, which will render the propriety very conspicuous, and is agreeable to Elsner's interpretation mentioned in the note above.

<sup>d</sup> *Remaineth a priest for ever.* Bishop Burnet would transpose this clause, *He was a priest of God for ever, made like unto the Son of God.* I cannot forbear observing, that I think his interpretation and illustration of this scripture, (4 Disc. p. 69—71,) the best I remember to have seen.

<sup>e</sup> *How great a man.* This is a severe stroke upon the Jews, not only as it proves the superior dignity of Christ above the Aaronical priesthood, but shews also that God had of old a people among the Gentiles, and that there was a person among them superior to Abraham himself.

SECT.  
VIII.  
Heb.  
VII. 6

only to *tythe the people that is their brethren, though indeed coming as well as themselves, out of the loins of Abraham: But he of whom we have now been speaking, whose pedigree is not reckoned from them, nor had any relation at all to the Abrahamic family, took tythes of Abraham himself, and even blessed him who had received the promises, so much celebrated in your history through every generation. But without all contradiction, the inferior is blessed of the superior, rather than the superior of the inferior: so that while pronouncing this blessing upon Abraham, Melchisedec evidently acted in an higher character than the patriarch himself sustained at that time, and in that circumstance.*

8 *And again, it may farther be observed for the illustration of this argument, that here, under the institution of Moses, men who die, receive tythes; the priests of that dispensation are mortal men, like their brethren; but there, in the case of Melchisedec, he [receiveth them] of whom it is only testified in scripture, that he liveth, but of whose death we have no account; and in that respect, he may be said to bear some resemblance to the ever-living and ever-blessed Jesus.*

9 *And indeed as one may say,<sup>f</sup> by Abraham and in his person, even Levi, who in his posterity received the tythes of the other descendants of Israel, was himself tythed. For he was yet in the loins of his father Abraham,<sup>g</sup> when Melchisedec met him upon the occasion I have just been mentioning.*

11 *Now I introduce all these reflections, to lead you to consider the aspect this wears as to the gospel, and the view it gives of its superior excellence in comparison of the law. And I may reason thus upon the premises. If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood," and no*

take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood,

<sup>f</sup> As one may say: *ὡς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.* Elsner is of opinion, (Observ. Sacra. Vol. II, p. 350.) that this should be translated, to say the truth: alledging, that it is agreeable to the respect we owe to the apostle's character, to suppose that he inserted those words as an apology for an assertion in itself just strictly just and exact, and he produces some passages out of the classics to vindicate this version. But justness of it is largely controverted

by Raphelius. Annot. ex Herod. An loc.

<sup>g</sup> In the loins of Abraham. Christ could not be said to be in the loins of Abraham, because of his extraordinary descent; otherwise the argument would, I think, have been inconclusive, as it would have been proved that Christ, as well as Levi, paid tythes in Abraham.

<sup>h</sup> Now—if perfection, &c.] Elsner justly observes, (Observ. Sacra. Vol. II. p. 351.)

(for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

more excellent atonement and intercession than theirs could be expected, (for you know that it was under it that the people received the law, that is, it was a part of the legal appointment to which a multitude of other precepts in the ritual referred, and on which the possibility of performing them depended;) *what farther need [was there] that another priest should arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and that he should not be reckoned according to the order of Aaron?*

sect.  
viii.  
Heb.  
vii. 11.

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

This will draw after it a long train of extensive and important consequences; *for the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity also be a change of the law;* for as I hinted above, all the ceremonial law depended upon it; and if our regards be directed to another priest, who is not of the family of Aaron, there is then an end of the obligation to the ritual, which confined all its precepts to priests of that line, and supposed that as long as it was binding, they

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

would always subsist and bear office. And that is now evidently the case, *for the person of whom these things are spoken, belonged to another tribe, of whom no one appertaineth to the Jewish altar, or had any right to minister at it.*

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

*For [it is] plain that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true Messiah, foretold by David in the passage I have been discoursing upon, sprung from Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing at all relating to the priesthood he ordained, so as to reserve any right of sacerdotal ministry to them, more than to any other tribe in Israel.*

15 And it is yet for more evident: for

independent on all genealogical controversy, which the most ingenious malice could urge concerning Mary's family, *it is yet more abundantly manifest, from the least attention to that*

that this is not to be considered as a consequence flowing directly from the verses immediately preceding, as might be concluded from the rendering of the *Vulgate and Graecis* Schmidius, and our common translation; but that it is the beginning of a new paragraph, or branch of discourse; and that it *must* be rendered, *but if*, or, which is much the same, *now if*, in support of which he produces several authorities.

[*Sprung from Judah.*] It may be worth remembering here, that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom, refer to the table made at the taxation, in proof of this; and it may be considered whether the apostle does not insinuate the same reference. See Dr. Barrow's Works, Vol. II. p. 188. Undoubtedly he would not have spoken with such confidence, if it had not been generally allowed.



single scripture alone which I have so frequently mentioned, *that there arises\* another priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec: Who, therefore, we may assure ourselves, is made and constituted not according or in regard to the law of the carnal commandment, that system of ceremonial precepts which contained so many things of an external, and comparatively of a carnal nature, and which considered men as dwelling in mortal flesh, and so to succeed each other; but according to the undecaying power of an indissoluble and endless life.* For you will be careful to remember what he testifieth, *Thou [art] a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec:* which implieth all that I have asserted concerning Christ. I let us reflect upon it with pleasure, that he retains his priesthood for ever; and therefore is able to give everlasting efficacy to his administration, and everlasting blessings to those who cast themselves upon its protection, animated by the glorious promises which it exhibits.

that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET our souls adore *the King of righteousness, and the King of peace*; submitting to him under the former title, that we may experience the peace which he gives, and which none can take away. Let us repose our confidence in *the Son of God, who without beginning of days, or end of life, abideth a priest for ever; a priest on a throne, to confirm the counsels of eternal peace transacted between the Father and himself. (Zech. vi. 13.)* To him do all the prophets bear witness, to him did all the patriarchs render humble homage, and his blessing was that which rendered Abraham, the father of the faithful, blessed indeed. He sprang from the tribe of Judah, and was the Shiloh that was to come before it ceased to be a tribe, according to the ancient oracle of dying Jacob. (Gen. xlix. 10.) But the honours of the priesthood are now transferred to, and centred in him, *not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but the superior power of an end-*

\* *That there arises.*] Dr. Whitby proves by many convincing authorities, that the particle *is* sometimes signifies *that*, as it is plain it here does.

1 *Of an endless life.*] Archbishop Tillotson think: the gospel is called the *power of an endless life* to intimate the

powerful influence which the views of immortality proposed by it, will have upon the mind. (Vol. III. p. 407.) I have therefore kept that thought a little in view, though I am far from imagining it to be the chief design of the expression.

less life. Let us rejoice that his life is endless, and that by him we may likewise attain to an endless life, to an immortality of glory. The priests of the Old Testament, the ministers of the New, as well as private believers under both dispensations, die; but the eternally prevailing priesthood of Jesus gives us life in death, and entitles us to the hope of that glorious world, where he will put his own likeness and splendour upon us, and make us in our inferior degrees of dignity, immortal kings and priests to God, even the Father: to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev. i. 6)

SECT.  
VIII.  
Verse

# SECT. IX.

From what had been said above, the apostle argues, that the Aaronical priesthood was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ; and by consequence that the obligation of the law was dissolved. Heb. VII. 18, to the end.

## HEBREWS VII. 18.

HEBREWS VII. 18.  
[FOR there is verily a disannulling of the commandment gone before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof]

I HAVE been discoursing largely on the resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; and I may fairly argue from hence, not only the superior dignity and excellence of Christ, but the freedom of Jews as well as Christians, from the obligations of the ceremonial law. Let me urge it therefore plainly, that there is an abolition of the former commandment in all its extent of ritual observances, because of its weakness and unprofitableness: for weak and unprofitable it appears to be, in comparison of that everlasting priesthood which I have just now mentioned. For the law of Moses made nothing perfect, but left in its most essential institutions, as we shall presently shew, the manifest traces and evidences of its own imperfection; whereas full provision for our pardon and sanctification, must be ascribed to the introduction of a better hope, by a dispensation of a far superior nature, by which we now under the gospel draw near to God in cheerful dependence upon the efficacious intercession of our ever-living and glorious High-Priest: A High-Priest, evidently 20

SECT.  
IX.  
Heb.  
VII. 18.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God

And inasmuch

\* The law made nothing perfect.] Mr. Pierce includes these words in a parenthesis: as if the apostle had said, "Since the law made nothing perfect, it could

not make the priesthood so; it could not remove the guilt of sin, or give strength to obey its command."

SECT. superior to any of the Aaronical line, on many as not without an oath  
IX. other accounts, and we may add on this like- he was made priest.

Heb. *without the solemnity of an oath<sup>b</sup> on the part*  
VII. 20. *of God; intended no doubt to shew the great*

21 *importance of what he was to transact. For*

*they indeed are become priests by a general*  
*Divine ordination, without the interposition of*  
*an oath at their investiture; but he, of whom we*  
*have been speaking, was set apart to his office*  
*with an oath, by him who said unto him, The*  
*Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent, Thou*  
*[art] a priest for ever according to the order of*

22 *Melchisedec. Now by so much dignity as such*  
*an introduction to his office by the oath of God*  
*adds to him, does it appear that Jesus our Lord*  
*is preferable to Aaron and his sons: from whence*  
*it is natural to infer, that he is the Surety of a*  
*better covenant<sup>c</sup>; or that the covenant of which*  
*he is the great Guarantee between God and*  
*man, is more excellent than that, of which*  
*Aaron and his sons might be said to be sureties*  
*in reference to certain acts which they were to*  
*perform on the part of the people to God, and*  
*in the name of God to the people, with which*  
*promises of temporal pardon and blessings are*  
*connected; for to them alone did that covenant*  
*extend.*

23 *And again, I may further observe, that they*  
*were many priests, because they were hindered*  
*by death from continuing in the perpetual execu-*

24 *tions of their office. But he, because he abideth*  
*for ever, and is risen to a life of immortal glory*  
*in the heavens, where he shall reign as long as*  
*any can need the benefit of his ministrations,*  
*hath a priesthood that never passeth over to an-*

25 *other as his successor. From whence also it ap-*  
*pears, that he is able to save to the uttermost,*  
*that is, always and completely to save, those*  
*who humbly approach to God by him as their*  
*appointed High Priest, always living to inter-*  
*cede for them in every circumstance of their re-*  
*spective lives, through all successive ages and*  
*generations.*

21 (For those  
priests were made  
without an oath, but  
this with an oath, by  
him that said unto  
him, The Lord sware,  
and will not repent,  
Thou art a priest for  
ever after the order  
of Melchisedec;)

22 By so much  
was Jesus made a  
Surety of a better  
testament.

23 And they truly  
were many priests,  
because they were  
not suffered to con-  
tinue by reason of  
death:

24 But this man,  
because he continu-  
eth ever, hath an  
unchangeable priest-  
hood.

25 Wherefore he  
is able also to save  
them to the utter-  
most, that come un-  
to God by him, see-  
ing he ever liveth to  
make intercession for  
them.

<sup>b</sup> An oath.] Which argues the solemnity and importance, and also the immutability of the action.

<sup>c</sup> Better covenant.] So [render] *ἀρχή*, and as this is the most common use of the word, so here it best suits the connection

such an  
came  
us, who is holy,  
harmless, undefiled,  
separate from sin-  
ners, and made  
higher than the hea-

Let us pause, therefore, and enjoy the com-  
fort of so glorious a truth; for the more we re-  
flect upon it, the more consolation shall we de-  
rive from it. Exactly *such an High Priest* as  
this, indeed *sued us*; his character most per-  
fectly corresponded to our circumstances and  
necessities, [*who was*] solemnly set apart to his  
office by the highest authority, and in the exe-  
cution of it, entirely *holy, harmless* in himself,  
*unpolluted* by others, *separate from* all defiling  
society of *sinners*, though mercifully conver-  
sant among them; and to complete all, a person  
of such dignity of nature, and so eminently dear  
to God, as to be *made higher than the heavens*<sup>d</sup>,  
and all their inhabitants, far more superior to  
the noblest of them, than Aaron himself to the  
meanest Levite who ministered in the tabernacle.

SECT.

Heb.  
vii. 26.

27 Who needeth  
not daily, as those  
high priests, to offer  
up sacrifice, first for  
his own sins, and  
then for the people's:  
for this he did once,  
when he offered up  
himself

Glorious High Priest indeed! *who had not* 27  
*daily necessity, as those high priests* appointed  
by Moses, *first to present sacrifices for his own  
sins, and then for those of the people*: of the  
former of these he never had any need, nor  
could there be any room for it; and *this last he  
did once for all in offering himself* as a spotless  
and acceptable sacrifice to God. *For the law,* 28  
as is well known, *constitutes men high-priests,  
who have infirmities* of their own, which need  
expiation; *but the word of the oath, which [reaches]  
beyond the law*, and of which I have so largely  
been speaking, [*constitutes*] to that office, the  
only-begotten *Son* of God, who is *consecrated  
for ever* to the execution of it, and is the great  
substance of what they were only dim and im-  
perfect shadows.

28 For the law  
maketh men high  
priests which have  
infirmity; but the  
word of the oath  
which was sworn  
the law, maketh the Son,  
who is consecrated  
for evermore

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET the introduction of this better hope which we receive by Chap.  
Jesus Christ, and which bringeth the greatest perfection of vii. 19  
happiness to those that embrace it, fill our hearts with thankful-  
ness to God, and with a solicitous zeal to secure an interest in it.

<sup>d</sup> *Higher than the heavens.* Mr. Black-  
wall's *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 241, 242.)  
takes notice of this expression, as very  
sublime, superior to Homer's description  
of Jupiter upon Mount Ida; and perhaps

taken from Psal. cxiii. 4, 6.

<sup>e</sup> *Beyond the law.* Our translators  
render *para tou nomou*, since the law. But  
*para* often signifies *beyond*. Compare  
chap. ix. 3. and many other places.

SECT. Let us *draw near to God* under its supporting influence, and  
 18. be quickened thereby to *purify ourselves from all pollutions of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God*; in firm dependence upon that great High Priest, whom he hath constituted with the solemnity of an oath, as the great Surety and Guarantee of the better covenant.

- Verse  
 20, 21 God helps the frailty of our nature, by transmitting his promises to us through the hands of his Son, and by giving us such  
 22a proof of his gracious regards, as his incarnation and sufferings afford: in which it is certain, that God hath already done what is far more astonishing than any thing which he hath promised farther to do. And Jesus takes his covenant-people under his care, and graciously engages to watch over them for their good, and to communicate to them all such assistances of his grace as may be sufficient to induce them to answer their part of the engagement.
- 24 He is possessed of an *unchangeable priesthood*: let us daily look to him, as knowing, that in consequence of the *new covenant*, which he ever lives to make, he is ever able completely to  
 25 all that come unto God by him. Let us every day, at every hour, have recourse to him as the Mediator of our access to God. And let us make the thoughts of him far to our minds, the thought of his sanctity, his dignity, and his love, confiding in that sacrifice he hath once for all offered to  
 27 people, being above all need of sacrificing for himself. To conclude, while we cheer and strengthen our hearts with such contemplations as these, let us always consider the obligation which the character of our High Priest and our Saviour lays on us, to be ourselves holy, harmless, and undefiled, and to maintain a separation from sinners, so far as the duties of life in the present circumstances of the world, may admit.

## SECT. X.

*The apostle briefly recapitulates what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High Priest of Christians, and farther illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old. Heb. VIII. 1, to the end.*

### HEBREWS VIII. 1.

NOW the chief article of the things which have been spoken, in the preceding parts of this discourse, [is this;] that we have such a great and illustrious High Priest as hath been describ-  
 NOW of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such an High Priest, who

is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

ed, made after the order of Melchisedec, and by the oath of God himself invested with immortal honours: *who* having on earth performed all that was necessary, by way of preparation, *hath now sat down at the right hand of the majestic throne in the heavens*, (compare chap. i. 3, note <sup>4</sup>), exalted by the Divine authority to rule over all things, for the glory of God, and the good of his people. And we are ever to regard him under his priestly, as well as his royal character, as *a minister of holy things, and of the true tabernacle, which not man, but the Lord himself, hath pitched*; a sanctuary infinitely superior to any which human hands could be concerned in rearing, and proportionable to the boundless wisdom, power, and magnificence of God.

SECT. X.  
Heb. VIII. 1.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

For every high priest, who ministers there, is constituted to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore [it was] necessary that this man also, even the glorious person of whom I speak, should have something to present. But we may observe by the way, that if he were always to continue on earth, he could not, in any consistence with the Jewish institutions, have been a priest,<sup>a</sup> to officiate at the temple of God in Jerusalem; as there are already a certain order of priests there, who offer the gifts of the people, according to the law, and it is expressly settled, that none of any other family should have access to these services, nor would it have been agreeable to the Divine schemes, that Jesus should, by extraordinary dispensation, have interfered with their peculiar functions. These he left entirely to those priests, who perform divine service to an economy, which contains only the example and shadow of celestial things:<sup>b</sup> as Moses was charged by the

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of

<sup>a</sup> He could not have been a priest.] From hence hath the great argument been taken against Christ's performing any sacerdotal acts upon earth; and consequently against the reasonableness of considering his death as a sacrifice, though the scripture expressly declares it was so. But it is evident the sense of the words given in the paraphrase, which undermines all such arguments, can alone be maintained as the true one; since it is plain, that under the Jewish economy, though none but a

priest ever ministered as such in the tabernacle, yet sacrifices were offered by special Divine appointment by some, (as by prophets, &c.) who were not of that order; and being so offered, were accordingly accepted.

<sup>b</sup> The example, &c. παράδειγμα τῶν ἐργων.] Dr. Sykes would explain it, the copy of what Moses saw in the mount: as if he had said, the former was but a copy of the latter, and no more to be compared with it than the shadow to the

SECT. X. oracle, when he was about to finish the tabernacle: for see, saith he, [that] thou make all things according to the model shewn thee upon the

Heb.  
VIII. 5.

mountain; lest an error, which may seem to thee small, should be more material than thou art aware. (Exod. xxv. 40.) Now this exactness was required in special regard to the typical representations couched under these ordinances, the particulars of which Moses himself did not perfectly understand. But he, that is, Christ, hath now much nobler services allotted to him in that heavenly sanctuary, inasmuch as he is the Mediator even of a better covenant than that in which the Jewish high priest mediated; which was established upon better promises than those of the Mosaic law; for they only referred to the blessings of a temporal Canaan, to be enjoyed by the people, while they continued obedient to its precepts, which placed them under such a special providence, as the nature of that dispensation absolutely required, and made them a spectacle to the whole world.

7 This superior excellence of that æconomy which our Lord introduces, might indeed have been concluded from its being exhibited after the Mosaic: for, as we know God never alters but for the better; if that first [covenant] had been esteemed so faultless, as to have no remaining deficiency, there would have been no place sought for a second; yet we in fact see this intimation of an exception taken to it: For finding fault with them,<sup>c</sup> that is, with the Jews, to whom he was addressing, he saith by the pro-

God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, See (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith,

substance. See Sykes on Christianity, p. 184. Pierce in loc. I rather take it in the sense generally given, for the administration or sketch of heavenly blessings. (Dr. Barrow, (Vol. II. p. 205.) renders it by a very expressive word, the subordination.

<sup>c</sup> Finding fault with them.] This is translated by Grotius and others, finding fault, he saith to them, and understood of finding fault with the former covenant. But that covenant was certainly wise and good, and adapted to the purpose for which it was designed and appointed. It seems therefore much more proper to understand it, finding fault with the Jews, (as God evi-

dently does in the words here preceding those quoted, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30,) for using the proverb against which he expresses so much displeasure in Ezek. xviii. 2. And in the words themselves he also finds fault with them for breaking this covenant, though he had with so much tender care brought them out of the land of Egypt. Raphelius in loc. translates the words under consideration, (μυρεσμενος γαρ αυτος, λυγος,) finding fault with them he saith; agreeably to our common translation; and justifies this version by the authority of Chrysostom, a Greek father, and by two passages from Herodotus, where μωρεσμενος is used with a dative case after it.

Behold the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their

phet Jeremiah, in that celebrated text which undoubtedly refers to the gospel-dispensation, (Jer. xxxi. 31.) *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.*

And he expressly mentions the superior excellence of the covenant there referred to, when compared with that which 'was transacted on mount Sinai. For he adds there, The transaction shall not be according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; as you well know it was while the great work of conducting them to Canaan was yet imperfect, that the law of Moses was given; because they continued not in my covenant, and I disregarded them,' saith the Lord. For this [is] 10 the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days; that is, in the times of the Messiah, saith the Lord; I will give my laws to their soul, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts, in more lasting characters than those in which I wrote the commandments on the tables of stone; and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people: I will answer all the import of that high relation to them, and they shall persist in their obedience to me. And they shall no more have need to 11 teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them. They shall have a much more certain and effectual teaching than they can derive one from another. For I will be mer- 12 ciful to their unrighteous deeds,\* various and aggravated as they are, and their sins and their

SECT.

x.

Heb. VIII. 3.

4 I disregarded them.] The quotation here is according to the Seventy, and by no means agreeable to the Hebrew, which reads it as we do, though I was a husband to them, saith the Lord. Mr. Pierce thinks the seventy interpreters, in their copy, either read כולתי, or כולתי, instead of כולתי, in either of which there is only the variation of a single letter, and this will justify the translation here given. Dr. Pocock maintains that the word is capable of such a translation, as it now

stands in the original. So that they seem to agree that our English version of the text, in question should be altered.

\* For I will be merciful.] Some would render ברי, and thereupon, that is, upon their being thus taught by me; or so that, which signification it is certain that ברי sometimes hath; but here it may signify, that because God had proposed to extend his pardoning mercy to them, he thus taught them by his Spirit; and therefore I have rendered it for.



SECT. *iniquities, of what kind soever, I will remember* iniquities will I re-  
 x. *no more*, so as to bring them into judgment; but member no more.  
 will pardon the most heinous offences, which  
 Heb. were incapable of expiation under the former  
 VIII. covenant.

12  
 13 Now I would observe in the close of this argu-  
 ment, that *when he saith, A new [covenant]*  
 shall be made, *he hath in effect made the first old*,  
 he hath, as it were, spoken of it as antiquated :  
*now that which is antiquated and fallen into*  
*old age*, cannot be expected to live long. And  
 so in like manner [*is*] that old covenant of  
 Moses just *ready to disappear*. Divine Provi-  
 dence will put such a period to it ere long, as  
 shall be remarkable in the eyes of the whole  
 world; so that the grand apparatus which now  
 preserves its visible form and lustre, shall be  
 known no more.

13 In that he saith,  
 A new covenant, he  
 hath made the first  
 old. Now that which  
 decayeth and waxeth  
 old, is ready to vanish  
 away.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6. ADORED be that grace which hath constituted and revealed  
 this *everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure,*  
*established on such promises*, as are, of all that can be conceived,  
 most valuable to sinful creatures; and especially on that, without  
 which no other declaration could impart any comfort to such, *I*  
 12 *will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their*  
*iniquities I will remember no more.* With this is connected that  
 other promise, so comprehensive of every thing that is truly va-  
 10 luable, *I will be a God unto them, and they shall be unto me a*  
*people* Happy indeed the people that are in such a case; yea,  
 happy the people whose God is the Lord, who are taught by him  
 to know him under that character, taught by that energy of his  
 Spirit, which gives his law to their mind, and inscribes it on  
 their heart. There may we ever retain it engraven in living  
 and durable characters, as a law of love, which may make obedi-  
 ence to every precept easy.

1 In this connection let us look with pleasure to that *High Priest*  
*who is set down on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*, and  
 presides over all for the good of his people, that *minister of the*  
 2 *true tabernacle, which the Lord, not man hath pitched!* ever  
 maintaining an humble dependence on the sacrifice he hath of-  
 fered: A sacrifice better than any of the Aaronical priests could  
 present, in proportion to the degree in which the covenant, of  
 7 which He is the Mediator, is nobler than theirs. The first co-  
 venant, wisely allayed with such a mixture of imperfection as was  
 13 suitable to its being introductory to the second, is now va-

nished, to make way for this second and better dispensation: to this let us therefore adhere, and so doing, cheerfully expect all the invaluable blessings it imparts.

## SECT. XI.

*The apostle illustrates the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high priest did on the great day of atonement. Heb. IX. 1—14.*

### HEBREWS IX. 1.

THEN verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

### HEBREWS IX. 1.

HOW reasonable it is to expect, that the former covenant of which I have been speaking, should give way to another and nobler, you may easily apprehend from surveying it, and considering in comparison with it, the great things which the gospel teaches us concerning Christ, and to which I would now call your contemplations. *The first tabernacle,*<sup>a</sup> you will therefore recollect, had certain ceremonial ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary: a sanctuary made of such materials as this earth of ours could furnish out, and the centre of a ritual which contained many institutions comparatively low and carnal. *For the*<sup>2</sup> *first part of the tabernacle was prepared of boards and curtains, pillars and coverings, which constituted a little apartment as a kind of antichamber to the oracle; in which there [was] the candlestick of pure gold with its seven lamps, and the table of shew-bread as it was called, and the setting on the twelve loaves upon it, which were always to stand before the Lord; and this apartment is called the Holy place, in which also the golden altar of incense stood.*

SECT.  
XI.  
Heb.  
IX. 1.

<sup>2</sup> For there was a tabernacle made: the first wherein was the candlestick and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the Sanctuary.

<sup>a</sup> *The first tabernacle.*] Mr. Pierce thinks this is to be considered as connected with chap. viii. 6. and that all which intervenes is a digression, though a very pertinent and useful one, relating to the meliority of the covenant established under that better Priest. But I can see no necessity for this, since it may well be connected with the words immediately preceding: as if he had said, and because that covenant was intended but

for a little while; therefore there was a great deal of external ceremony in it, fit for the puerile disposition of the persons to whom it was given. Our translators strangely supply the word *covenant* instead of *tabernacle*, whereas most copies read *tabernacle*, and that undoubtedly suits the connection best. The word we render *ordinances* is *δικαιωματα*, justifications, or ways of becoming righteous.

SECT.

XL.

Heb.

IX. 3

And beyond the second veil was that apartment of the tabernacle which was called the *Holy of Holies*, or the most holy of all, where God was pleased to keep his special residence, and which

4 was as his presence-chamber. *Having the golden censer,*<sup>b</sup> in which the high priest used to burn incense on the great day of atonement, and the ark of the covenant so covered over on every side with gold, that it appeared as if it had been one mass of that precious metal: in which apartment, in or very near the ark,<sup>c</sup> [was] the golden pot, containing the manna that remained incorruptible through so many ages, and the rod of Aaron that blossomed, and the two tables of the covenant on which the ten commandments were inscribed by the finger of

5 God, And over it were the cherubs of glory,<sup>d</sup> shadowing with their wings that golden cover of the ark which was called the *mercy-seat*, or propitiatory, as to it propitiations were referred, and where God was pleased to appear in a visible symbol of his propitious and gracious presence. These were all important things in the Mosaic tabernacle, concerning which there

6 is not now [room] to speak particularly. And these things being thus prepared and adjusted, both in the holy and most holy place, the ordinary priests went continually into the first apartment of the tabernacle, performing [their] daily services, by trimming the lamps, and burning incense upon the holy altar, changing the loaves on the sacred table every sabbath, and sprinkling the blood of the victims before the

7 veil. But into the second apartment only the high priest [went] once a year, and that not without the blood of the sin-offering, which he offered first for himself, and then [for] the sins of ignorance committed by the people, to

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the *Holiest of all*;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

<sup>b</sup> The golden censer.] It hath been queried, why the golden altar was not mentioned; and some are of opinion that it may be comprehended in the word *Incense-burner*, which we render *censer*.

<sup>c</sup> In which: *iv. 5.*] I say, in or near which, as many good commentators think the words *iv. 7.* may be taken in that latitude, to reconcile it with 1 Kings viii. where it is said, that there was nothing

in the ark save the two tables of stone. (It perhaps *iv. 5.* in which, may refer to *xxv. 10.* the tabernacle; rather than to *xxv. 10.* the ark, as probably Aaron's rod, which is here said to be in the same place, could not lie in the ark.)

<sup>d</sup> Cherubs of glory.] That is, the cherubs that waited upon the *Schechmâh*, or sensible glory of the deity.

which sort of offences alone, and not to those sect  
xi.  
presumptuously committed, the efficacy of the atonement extended.

\* The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

Such was the ritual of Moses, *the Holy Spirit* Hob.  
K. 6  
by whom it was prescribed, signifying, by this difficulty of entrance, and the necessity of the incense-cloud, and the atoning blood, *that the way into the holiest place, that is, into God's immediate presence, was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle had its continuance, and retained its station and use, or in other words, while the Jewish economy lasted. Which, far* from being the grand and ultimate scheme, [*is*] only a kind of allegorical figure and parable referring to the glorious displays of the *present time*;\* in which, nevertheless, there is hitherto a continuance of the temple-service; so that *gifts and sacrifices are still offered, which yet in the nature of things, are not able to make the person who performs the service perfect with respect to the conscience; as they refer not to the real expiation of guilt; but only to averting some temporal evils*<sup>†</sup> which the law denounced on transgressors. For this the Mosaic dispensation was insufficient, which in the peculiarities of it related, not to the views of another life, nor the sublimest means of preparing the soul for it; [*but consisted*] only\* in the distinction

† Which feat a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.

10 *What* <sup>†</sup> *only* transgressors. For this the Mosaic dispensation was insufficient, which in the peculiarities of it related, not to the views of another life, nor the sublimest means of preparing the soul for it; [*but consisted*] only\* in the distinction

\* Referring to the present time.† We render it, *for the time then present*. But the words *οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμεῖς ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι* may certainly bear the rendering which I have given them; and I would understand it, not merely as if he had said that this similitude of comparison may be properly used in this present time, as to the temple at Jerusalem, which has its *holy of holies*, as the *Mosaic tabernacle* had; but that the constitution before described was a *figurative* representation of the Christian dispensation, which at the time when the apostle wrote, was displayed in all its glory.

† Averting some temporal evils.‡ This in a few words expresses what I take to be of the greatest importance for understanding the Mosaic sacrifices; which is, that they were never intended to expiate offences to such a degree, as to deliver the sinner from the final judgment of God in another world, but merely to make his

peace with the government under which he then was, and to furnish him with a pardon, pleadable against any prosecution which might be commenced against him in their courts of justice, or any exclusion from the privilege of drawing near to God, as one externally at peace with him, in the solemnities of his temple-worship. And I must desire the reader to examine, and digest this explication, that I may not be under the necessity of repeating it for the illustration of what is to follow.

\* [*Consisted*] only.‡ The construction of the Greek is perplexed: I have given the version that seemed to me most natural; but Mr. Pierce would connect the two verses thus, *He who worshipped— with meats and drinks*; and reads *ἐκαιοψαλς* instead of *ἐκαιοψαλς*, in conformity with the Alexandrian and other manuscripts; supplying *ἀλλὰ οὐ*: which were corporeal ordinances, imposed till the time

SECT.

XI.

Heb.  
IX. 10

between different kinds of *meats*, clean or unclean; *and drinks*, some of which were allowed, and others denied to priests in some circumstances, and to Nazarites in others; *and in different baptisms*, or *washings* either of the whole body, or a part of it in water, as different occasions demanded; *and in a variety of other ordinances* relating to the purification of the *flesh*, which were *to continue* in force only *till the time of reformation*, when things should be put into a better situation by the appearance of the Messiah himself in his church. But *Christ* having now appeared, and *being become an High Priest* of those good things which were then future, and which the church through preceding ages expected as *to come*, the obligation of these things would of course soon be superseded. Accordingly he performed his ministry *in a greater and more perfect tabernacle* above, *not made with human hands*, that is, *not making any part of this lower creation*. Neither doth he expiate the guilt of his people by presenting before God *the blood of goats, and of calves*, and of young bullocks, which were the noblest sacrifices the high priest presented in the day of atonement; *but it is by the efficacy of his own blood*, which he continually pleads before the Father, that *he hath entered once for all into the holy place* above,<sup>h</sup> *having obtained [for us] by his perfect sacrifice, that eternal redemption* and salvation, of which all the remissions and all the benefits procured by the ministration of the Aaronical priesthood, were but very imperfect figures.

- 13 And certainly a little reflection may convince us of this; *for if the blood of bulls and of goats*, of which I have just been speaking, when presented to God with the appointed circumstances on the day of general expiation; *and in cases of personal pollution, the ashes of the red heifer*, burnt with hyssop, scarlet wool, and other ingredients, being mingled with water, and

in meats and drinks; and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an

of reformation, that is, the appearance of the Messiah.

<sup>h</sup> Entered once.] Hence Bishop Pearson infers, that Christ ascended only once for

all into heaven, and not again and again, as the Socinians pretended. Pearson on the Creed, p. 109.

*And his blood cleanses our conscience from dead works.* 62

neither sprinkling the unclean, sanctifierh to the purifying of the flesh;

*sprinkled on the persons who were ceremonially unclean, sanctified to the cleansing of the flesh;* and hath so much efficacy in consequence of the Divine institution, as to reconcile God to the whole Jewish people in the former instance, and in the other, to introduce persons to the liberty of approaching him in his sanctuary, which

sect.

xi.

Heb.

ix. 18.

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

would otherwise have been denied them: *How much more efficacious shall the blood of Christ be, even of that Divine Saviour, who by the aids of the eternal Spirit,* supporting the infirmities of his human nature, and animating him to the exercise of all those virtues and graces which shed such a lustre around all the infancy of his cross, *offered himself, as a most spotless and acceptable sacrifice to God?* How much more, I say, shall that blood of his avail to *cleanse your conscience from the pollutions ye have contracted by your dead, unprofitable, and sinful works, that ye may freely approach, and serve the living God with acceptance?* How surely shall it appease that consciousness of guilt, which might otherwise be so painful to us, and introduce us to present our homage in the Divine presence, with the hope of the most favourable regard.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THE whole progress of the apostle's argument will lead us to reflect on the reason we have for thankfulness, whose eyes are

*How much more shall the blood of Christ.]* The argument in these words seems to consist in this; it was merely by an arbitrary appointment, that blood and ashes, which in themselves are rather defiling, should be the methods of purification; but a death like that of our blessed Lord, has in itself a proper and mighty energy to promote the purification of the soul.

*\* Eternal Spirit.]* Many have understood this of the Deity in general, or the Divine nature of Christ. But since the words may in a very good and consistent sense be referred to the Spirit, I could not acquiesce in any other interpretation. Bishop Fell considers them in the same light, and pertinently mentions Christ's being conceived, proclaimed, anointed for working miracles, and at last voluntarily laying down, and taking up, his life by

this Spirit. And I have the pleasure to find Dr. Owen (on the Spirit, p. 143, see also his Exposition on the place,) expressing himself to the same purpose; mentioning also, agreeable to the paraphrase, that by this Spirit, Christ was strengthened in the exercise of that admirable faith, submission, charity and zeal, which he shewed in his dying moments.—But when this Spirit is called eternal, I can never think with Dr. Patrick, (on Num. xix. 4.) that it refers to the durable nature of the ashes used for purification under the law; nor with Mr. Hallet, (Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 36,) that it is opposed to the spirit of brutes, or relates to the eternal redemption purchased by Christ. It seems a plain testimony to the eternality, and consequently the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

## 64 *Reflections on the Jewish sacrifices, and that of Christ.*

SECT. directed, not to an earthly sanctuary and its furniture, splendid  
XI. indeed, yet comparatively dark, mutable, and perishing; but to  
the holiest of all, the way to which is now clearly manifested.

Verse  
1, 2 What matter of solid and everlasting joy! that whereas those  
9 gifts and sacrifices were incapable of making those perfect who  
10 presented them, or attended upon them; and the ordinances of  
that sanctuary consisted only in meats and drinks, and corporeal  
11 purifications and ceremonies; we by faith behold an *High Priest*  
of a better and more *perfect tabernacle*, an *High Priest* who hath  
12 wrought our *eternal redemption*! and *entered once for all* into  
heaven for us! *Eternal redemption*! who hath duly considered  
its glorious import? To him, and only to him, who hath atten-  
tively considered it is the name of the *Redeemer* sufficiently  
dear. But O, what short of the possession of it, can teach us  
the true value! What, but to view that temple of God above,  
where through his intercession we hope to be made pillars, and  
from thence, to look down upon that abyss of misery and des-  
truction from which nothing but his blood was sufficient to ran-  
som us!

13 Let that blood, which is our redemption, be our confidence. We  
know there was no real efficacy in that of bulls or of goats, or in  
the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean. All that these  
things could do was to purify the flesh, and to restore men  
14 to an external communion with God in the Jewish sanctuary.  
But the blood of Christ can purify the conscience, and restore  
its peace when troubled, when tortured with a sense of guilt,  
contracted by dead works, which render us unfit for, and inca-  
pable of Divine converse. To that blood therefore let us look:  
let the death of Christ be remembered, as the great spotless sa-  
crifice by which we draw nigh unto God; and let those virtues  
and graces which were displayed in it, under the influences of  
that eternal Spirit, which was given unto him without measure,  
concur with that benevolence which subjected him to it for our  
sakes, to recommend him to our humblest veneration and our  
warmest affections.

To conclude, since it is so expressly said, that the Holy Ghost  
signified in some degree the great and important doctrines of the  
gospel by the constitution of the Jewish ritual; let us think of  
that ritual, whatever obscurity may attend it in part, with a be-  
coming esteem; and peruse it with a view to that great antetype  
who is in every sense the end of the law for righteousness to  
every one who believeth; to him, who by fulfilling it hath given  
it a glory, much brighter than that which was reflected upon it  
from the face of Moses, or the most splendid magnificence of  
Solomon's temple.

SECT. XII.

*The apostle discourses by way of digression, on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it. Heb. IX. 15, to the end.*

HEBREWS IX. 15.

AND for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

HEBREWS IX. 15.

I HAVE just mentioned the offering which Christ made of himself to God by the eternal Spirit; and it is a subject so delightful and so important, that I must dilate upon it a little more largely. Attend to it therefore, that he is in this respect, and for this purpose, the Mediator of a new, and better covenant,<sup>a</sup> far preferable to that of Moses; that death being undergone, for the redemption and expiation of transgressions against the former covenant, and which could not be removed by it, they who are called to the engagements and benefits of this, might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance, to which that of Sinai had no immediate reference;<sup>b</sup> its promises, only relating to an inheritance in Canaan, and to those temporal enjoyments which were there conferred upon those who were obedient to the Divine law: I say, so it is in consequence of his undergoing death, that he effectually secures these blessings to us by his covenant; for where a covenant [is] answerable to that which typified this of what I now speak, it necessarily imports the death of that by which the covenant is confirmed.<sup>c</sup> For you know that sacrificial rites have ever attend-

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament

<sup>a</sup> Mediator of a new covenant.] This is the only place in the New Testament, where *διαθήκη* can be supposed to signify a testament, or will, rather than a covenant. But the mediator of a testament is a very improper expression; and one cannot suppose the apostle would play on the ambiguity of the word; I therefore think with Mr. Pierce, that it is better here to retain the usual translation of it. —Redemption In the next clause plainly signifies purchasing the pardon.

<sup>b</sup> Immediate reference.] For the proof of this I must refer my readers to what my learned friend Dr. Warburton has written, I think, irrefragably on this subject, in his elaborate and ingenious

volumes on the Divine Legation of Moses. By which the covenant is confirmed. Mr. Pierce would render it, of that sacrifice which is appointed by God to purify, and he brings a remarkable instance from Appian, where *διαθήκη* signifies pacifier. He saith the scope of the writer requires that it should be so translated here, and accordingly in the next verse he renders it, The pacifier can do nothing, as long as he liveth. But I think if *διαθήκη* be rendered, he by whom it is confirmed, the argument will be clearer. Yet I confess considerable difficulties attend both those interpretations; though the connection with what follows appears easier upon that which I have given. The



sect. ed the most celebrated covenants which God

xii. hath made with men; so that I may say, a co-

v<sup>h</sup>enant [is] confirmed over the dead, so that it,

Heb. does not avail, nor has any force at all, while he

lx. 17. by whom it is confirmed liveth. From whence,

18 and on which principle we may observe, nei-

ther was the first [covenant] of which we have

been speaking, I mean that of Moses, originally

transacted without the blood of an appointed sa-

19 crifice. For when every command was spoken

and delivered according to the law by Moses to

all the people, it is expressly said, that taking

the blood of calves and goats mingled with water,

and dipping into it a piece of scarlet wool, and

a bunch of hyssop,<sup>a</sup> he sprinkled the book itself,

which contained the covenant, and all the pro-

20 ple who were to enter into it; Saying at the

same time, *This is the blood of the covenant*

*which God hath commanded with respect to you,*

appointing you to declare your consent to the

terms of it, as you desire Divine favour and ac-

21 ceptance. And the tabernacle and all the ves-

sels of Divine service with which it was fur-

nished, he also sprinkled with the same blood of

22 the sacrifices. And indeed almost all things

were under the law purified by blood in their first

consecration; and it was by blood that they

were cleansed from pollution, whether general or

special. And if any transgression had been

committed through ignorance, or surprise, yet

so solicitous was the blessed God to maintain

the honour of his law, and the decorum of

of force after men  
are dead: otherwise  
it is of no strength  
at all, whilst the tes-  
tator liveth.

18 Whereupon nei-  
ther the first testa-  
ment was dedicated  
without blood.

19 For when Mo-  
ses had spoken every  
precept to all the  
people according to  
the law, he took the  
blood of calves and  
of goats, with water  
and scarlet wool, and  
hyssop, and sprinkled  
both the be-  
all the peopl

20 Saying, This is  
the blood of the tes-  
tament which God  
hath enjoined unto  
you.

21 Moreover, he  
sprinkled likewise  
with blood both the  
tabernacle, and all  
the vessels of the  
ministry.

22 And almost all  
things are by the law  
purged with blood:

reader will do well, if he consult Dr. Whithy upon this passage, who assigns and vindicates an interpretation much the same with that which is proposed in this version and paraphrase.—The phrase *avafon papiDai*, which I have rendered, necessarily imports, is very strong; the death must be produced, it must not only be effected, but also made apparent. Elmsler hath shewn, (Observ. Vol. II. p. 361.) that the word *papiDai* is used in a forensic sense, for what is produced, and proved, or made apparent in a court of Judicature.

<sup>a</sup> Scarlet wool, and hyssop.] It is certain that Moses, in his account of this transaction, (Lev. xvi.) does not mention all these circumstances. Probably St. Paul

received them from tradition. Ceremonies of a similar kind are prescribed. Lev. xiv. 4—6; 49—52, as in *cleansing the leper*. And it is highly probable, that the sprinkling the blood of the sin-offering might be done in this method. The blood was mixed with water, to preserve it from coagulating; and perhaps to thus the mixture of sacramental wine with water, which pretty soon prevailed in the primitive church, might have some intended reference. It is the opinion of Dr. Owen that the ceremony here referred to, was constantly performed on the day of atonement. But it is certain it is not expressly prescribed in the account given us of the ritual of that day.

and without shedding of blood is no remission.

his administration, that in case of such offences, *without shedding of blood*, where an animal sacrifice could be procured, *there was no forgiveness of sin.* SECT. XII. Heb. IX. 22

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these

[It was] therefore necessary, according to the Divine appointment, that the tabernacle, and those instruments and utensils belonging to it, which were the copies or imitations of things in the heavens, should be purified by the blood of these animal victims; but the celestial things themselves, with more excellent sacrifices than they, even with the sacred blood of Christ himself, which these offerings were designed to typify. And the expedience of this appears

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us

from the method which God hath in fact taken; for it is plain, that *Christ is not entered into an earthly tabernacle, or holy places made with hands*, though adorned with ever so much art and expence, [which] at best [were] but the figures, or imperfect copies of the true: but he is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, as our great High Priest, and ever-glorious and powerful intercessor.

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place, every year with blood of others.

Not that it was necessary he should offer himself frequently, as the High Priest entered into the most holy place yearly on the day of atonement, with the blood of others, that is, of bullocks and goats: For then, as the Jewish sacrifice was often repeated, so it would have been necessary for him often to have suffered in many successive periods, from the foundation of the world, in order to the salvation of good men in their several ages and generations; which we know he did not. But now once for all at the conclusion of the ages, he hath been made manifest for

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath he

\* No forgiveness ] I look upon this as a certain proof, that the sin offerings were not merely tokens of friendship restored between God and the offender, but that the blood was looked upon as the consideration on which the pardon was granted, being an acknowledgment on the part of the offerer that he had deserved death if God had been strict to mark offences.

[The celestial things themselves with more excellent sacrifices] It may perhaps seem strange, that celestial things should be spoken of as needing to be purified, and

cleansed. But it is to be considered, that as the sacred dwelling and the vessels were esteemed to be polluted by the Israelites, who in various degrees had access to them, so heaven would have been, as it were polluted by the entrance of such sinners as went into it, had not the blood of Christ intervened. This I think much more natural, than with Bishop Fell, to explain it of some pollutions contracted by the sin of the angels.

[Conclusion of the ages] So our Latin word *saeculus* is most exactly rendered, meaning the last of the dispensations God

- seccr. *the abolishing of sin, and wiping out its dreadful* appeared to put away  
 XII. *score, by the sacrifice of himself, that he might* sin by the sacrifice  
 Heb. *purchase the pardon of it, and effectually teach* of himself.  
 IX. 26. *men to subdue it,<sup>h</sup> when they see such a ran-*  
 27 *som paid for their forfeited lives. And just* 27 And as it is  
*as with respect to the common lot of mankind,* appointed unto man  
*it is appointed to all men once to die, and after* once to die, but af-  
*that the judgment is ordained, which fixes them* ter this the judg-  
*in an unalterable state, without any farther re-* ment :  
 28 *volution of life and death : So Christ passed* 28 So Christ was  
*through one death, no more to be subject to the* once offered to bear  
*possibility of it, and having once been offered, as* the sins of many ;  
*the scape-goat on the great day of expiation, to* and unto them that  
*bear the punishment due to the sins of many, even* look for him shall  
*of all his believing people; and to carry away, as* he appear the second  
*it were, the guilt of them into the land of obli-* time, without sin,  
*vision, he shall the second time appear to preside* unto salvation.  
*in that judgment which men are to undergo.*  
*And then he shall come like the high-priest,<sup>i</sup>*  
*in his richest dress, when the grand act of ex-*  
*piation was over, without any thing that wears*  
*the marks of humiliation or abasement, or re-*  
*sembles the form in which he came to make an*  
*atonement for sin.<sup>k</sup> And while he brings with*  
*him everlasting terror to all that despise and reject*  
*him, he shall manifest himself to those who*  
*have waited for him, to complete their eternal*  
*salvation<sup>l</sup> and conduct them in their entire*

ever intended to give mankind. See Vol. II. sect. 100. note d.

<sup>h</sup> Purchase the pardon of it, and teach men to subdue it. ] Dr. Harris, (in his Discourse on the principal Representations of the Messiah, p. 252,) explains *αἰσχρογὰς ἀπαγέρων*, for the abolishing of sin, of wiping out a score, so that it should be no longer actionable. But I think it extends to every method of abolishing sin or putting it away, and may include, besides the satisfaction made to the Divine justice, the subduing it also in our own hearts.

<sup>i</sup> Like the High Priest. ] I doubt not but there is indeed, as Limborch supposes, an allusion here to the high priest coming out to bless the people who were waiting for him in the temple when the great day of atonement was over. And as he then appeared in his golden garments, whereas before he had officiated in the plain dress of a common priest; and as the trumpet of the jubilee on that year sounded to proclaim the commencement

of that happy period; there is not perhaps an image that can enter into the mind of man more suitable to convey the grand idea which the apostle intended to convey by it, than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the grand solemnity to which it referred.

<sup>k</sup> Without sin. ] Mr. Fleming supposes this refers to Christ's having, in that great day, the glory of the *Shechinah* upon him, of which the splendour of the richest habits Aaron and his sons wore was but a faint shadow; and that it farther alludes to the stripping Adam of that glory which he contracted from his first interview with the *Shechinah*, as soon as he had sinned. In consequence of which, Christ appearing in the days of his flesh like one of us, without this glory, might be said to come as *with sin*, or, as it is expressed, Rom. viii. 3, *In the likeness of sinful flesh*, Flem. Christology, Vol. II. p. 301.

<sup>l</sup> To salvation: *εἰς σωτηρίαν*. ] Wolfius is of opinion, that these words should be

persons, to those regions of glory which he hath prepared for them. SECT. XII.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE are heirs of an eternal inheritance, and we owe all our expectations of it to the Mediator of that better covenant, who at the expence of his own blood procured redemption from the guilt and condemnation of those transgressions which have been committed under the first covenant: what praise do we owe to that voluntary victim who made his blood the seal of that better covenant? O, that as all the vessels of the sanctuary, and all the people were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices, on that day when Moses entered them into solemn covenant with God; so our souls and all our services might be under the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! By the efficacy of that were the heavenly places sanctified and prepared for us; by that our way into them is opened: let us be daily looking up to the Lord Jesus Christ, as gone to appear in the presence of God for us, and entered into heaven with his own blood. May his death be as efficacious to subdue the power of sin in our hearts, as it is to expiate our guilt before God. Then may we look forward with pleasure to the great solemnities of death and judgment, and expect that faithful Redeemer, who though he is to come no more as a sacrifice for sin, will then appear for the complete salvation of all, who have obediently received him under that character, and waited for him according to his word. Verse 15

In the mean time, that we may be engaged thus to apply to him, and improve our knowledge of him to the great purposes intended; may we live in the continual views of death, as what is indispensably appointed to men; and remember that it is our certain inevitable doom. May we also consider it, as standing in a most certain connection with judgment; assuring ourselves, that whatever the period of time between the one and the other may be, there is no room for a change in our character or state. Let therefore the thoughts of judgment, and its awful eternal consequences, stir us up to a diligent preparation for death. Let it engage us to make an immediate application to Christ as the great Saviour, with entire submission to his princely authority; for if that be disregarded, how shall we meet him as our

connected with those immediately proceeding, as expressing the view with which they waited for the returning Saviour, namely that they might obtain complete salvation. But, with Grotius, I think it preferable to connect them in this manner, *οφθησεται—ως σωτηριαν*, he shall ap-

pear—to salvation. And certainly this is much more natural; than with Beza and Erasmus Schmidius, to refer it to so remote a clause as *ως το πολλων αμαρτιων ημαρτων, to bear the sins of many, in order to their salvation.* See Wolfii Curæ Paideologicæ, in loc.

SECT. Judge! For when he *appears the second time for the salvation* of his people, he will execute righteous vengeance on his *enemies*; and that vengeance can never appear *so terrible*, as when considered as coming from the mouth of *him* who was once manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

## S E C T. XIII.

*The apostle returns from his digression to prove, that the legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience; and from thence argues the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it. Heb. X. 1—15.*

## HEBREWS X. 1.

SECT.

XIII.

Heb.  
X. 1

**YOU** see that it is the design of all this discourse, to raise your minds from the Mosaic law to the gospel; and it is an important design, which the dearer you are to me, the more earnestly I must pursue. *For the law having, as it were, only a shadow, or imperfect sketch, of future good things, and not the complete delineation, or the very image of the things [themselves<sup>a</sup>,] could by no means, even by those sacrifices of atonement which they always offer yearly<sup>b</sup>, and are the most solemn which belong to the whole Hebrew ritual, perfect those who come unto [them,] so as to remove the moral guilt of their offences, and bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, and to that settled peace of conscience, which results from a sense of his* 2 *favour. And indeed the very circumstance of their yearly repetition is a proof of this; for otherwise, that is, could they have made such a complete reconciliation, they would have ceased*

## HEBREWS X. 1.

**FOR** the law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

3 For then would they not have ceased

<sup>a</sup> Shadow and image : *σκιά, εἰκὼν.*

Here is an allusion, I apprehend, to the different state of a painting, when the first sketch only is drawn, and when the proceeding is finished; or to the first sketch of a painting, when compared with what is yet more expressive than even the completest painting, an exact image. I cannot be of opinion with Mr. Pierce, that *very image*; here signifies the original from whence the delineation or draught is made: It is a very unusual sense of the word; nor can I think, Rom. i. 23, sufficient to justify and support it. Besides, even under the gospel, we have not the heavenly blessings themselves, but only a

clearer representation or revelation of them.

*atonement*, being by far the most solemn of any of the expiatory kind among the Jews, are mentioned here with the utmost propriety. And this interpretation seems to supersede the necessity of following Mr. Pierce's translation; who would, by transposing the points, render it, *The law having only shadow of good things to come—yearly, can never with the same sacrifices, which they continually offer, make the comers thereunto perfect.*

to be offered, because that the worshipper once purged should have had no more conscience of sins

to be offered,<sup>c</sup> any more, at least by the same persons. because they who had performed that service, being once purified by it, would have had no more consciousness of sins, but have enjoyed the efficacy of that atonement to the last moment of their lives, on applying to it on any future occasion; as we Christians do, by renewed acts of faith on our great sacrifice, if through the frailty of human nature we are so unhappy

MR. T.

XXII.

Heb.

x. 2.

3 But in these sacrifices there is a remembrance again and again of sins every year

as to fall into sin But in them [there is] of course, as it were, a yearly commemoration of sins, by a yearly presentation of the atoning blood of new sacrifices in the most holy place, which shews that their efficacy is so far from extending, as that of the true expiation does, to all nations, times, and places, that it only looks back upon the year completed,<sup>d</sup> and hath no influence, even with regard to those persons who are actually present in the temple, or any thing future

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins

And indeed the reason of this is plain, for [it is] in the nature of things impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should, on the whole, take away sins, or make a real atonement to God as the great governor of the world, for the moral guilt of any transgression though it may by Divine appointment put a stop to any further prosecution which might proceed in Jewish courts, or any such extraordinary judgment, as the peculiar state of things among that people might otherwise require.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not,

Therefore when the Messiah is described in David, as making his entrance into the world, he saith, in those well-known words, (Psal xl. 7) "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not [accept,] but a body thou

<sup>e</sup> They would have ceased to be offered } This reading is more easy and natural than that which our translators have followed, while they have placed this in the margin. It is supported by many copies, and adopted by the Vulgate and Syriac version

<sup>d</sup> Looks back upon the year completed } I am surprised that Diodorus should imagine this must have been expressly revealed to the apostle. I think it sufficiently appears from the tenor of the Mosaic law that if the expiation was to be

offered yearly for the whole people, it must include the expiation of sins remaining untried to the time of its offering, and if it were to be repeated the next year, it could reach no further. — But still it must be remembered, that this only referred to those temporal punishments which God, as the King of Israel, might have inflicted upon the whole people, if by a neglect of this annual sacrament, they had in effect broke their covenant, and thrown a contempt upon his institution



11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins: *And this agrees with what I observed above, to be the property of a true and effectual atonement. For indeed every priest of the Mosaic law standeth daily ministering, and offering the same sacrifices often, which, as appears from that very circumstance of the repetition of them, can never avail to take away the guilt of sins; But*

12 But this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God: *he, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, having offered one ever-efficacious sacrifice for the sins of all who shall believe in him, and obey him, hath for ever sat down at the right-hand of God; never more to stand and minister in such a manner as he has done, but answering the great character drawn in the prophet, (Zech. vi. 13,) of a priest on a throne, where royal dignity, and certain conquest, are added to his other glories; For the rest, waiting only till the appointed time*

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. *come, in which according to the promise we have been contemplating, all his enemies shall be made the footstool of his feet. For by that one*

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. *offering up of himself, concerning which we have been speaking, he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified by it, and on whom its blood is, as it were, sprinkled, and hath rendered all believers perfectly acceptable to God; and made effectual provision for raising them to a state of complete holiness, felicity, and glory.*

#### IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE the shadows are now fled away, and the substance is come; since the most substantial blessings are bestowed by the gospel; let us celebrate the praises of him by whom we have received them; of him, who so cheerfully presented himself a spotless sacrifice to God for us. In the body which God hath prepared for him, he fulfilled all righteousness, and made a most perfect atonement: in that he, once for all, made full expiation for the sins of his people, having no sin of his own to expiate: and O, with what grateful emotions of heart should we commemorate his love; reflecting that when all other sacrifices would have been vain, he should so readily cry out, *Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God;* when that will of his heavenly Father was, that his body should be offered in so painful and so tragical a manner! With such readiness let us too concur in every intimation of the Divine good pleasure: let us, like the blessed man whom David described, not only *fear the Lord, but delight greatly in his commandments,* (Psal. cxii. 1,) and la-



74 *Where there is remission, there needs no more sacrifice.*

sect. bon, that the law of God may be inscribed on our hearts, and  
 XII. the characters grow larger and deeper there. This shall please  
 Verse 8 God better than the most costly sacrifices, even of his own ritual; better than any whole burnt-offering, and sin-offering, though it were an ox or a bullock, which hath horns and hoofs, Psalm lxi. 31.

- 10 May we be so sanctified through the sacrifice of Christ, according to the will of God, that we may approach the Divine Being with acceptance. And may we daily be looking to Jesus as sat  
 12, 13 down at his Father's right-hand; where he waits till his enemies are made his footstool. Let us likewise expect that great event in full assurance of faith. Let our affections be there where Jesus sits; and let us live in cheerful confidence, that the Saviour, in whose cause we are engaged, will finally appear triumphant over all his enemies and ours. Amen.

S E C T. XIV.

*The apostle urges Christians to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant gave them, to the purposes of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and a benevolent love to each other.* Heb. X. 15—25.

HEBREWS X. 15.

SECT. I HAVE spoken of Christ, as having by one offering of himself for ever perfected those that  
 XIV. are sanctified; and this is a representation very agreeable to the word of God: for even the Holy  
 Heb. Ghost testifieth to us\* in that passage (Jerem. X. 15. xxxi. 33, &c.) which I have quoted above, after  
 16 having before said, *This [is] the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will give my laws to be written on their hearts; I will also inscribe them upon their minds: my Holy Spirit shall work in them cordial dispositions humbly to practise and*  
 17 obey them; He adds in consequence of this, *their sins and their transgressions, how many and aggravated soever they may have been, I*  
 18 *will never remember any more. But where [there is] such an entire remission of these, as this great amnesty, this universal pardon implies, which wipes out the very remembrance*

HEBREWS X. 15.  
 WHEREOF the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now, where remission of these is,

\* Testifieth to us.] Or, as it might be rendered, bears witness with us, that is, accords to, and confirms by his testimony

what I have said; in which sense the original word is used, as Raphael hath shown by several Greek Classics.

*Therefore we should draw nigh through the blood of Jesus: 76*

there is no more offering for sin.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And having an High Priest over the house of God:

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our

of all offences, [there is] no more room for any sacrifice for sin, which implies that they are remembered, and remain to be expiated.

This therefore, my dear brethren, is now our happy case; and let us endeavour to enjoy and improve it aright. *Having such liberty to enter into the holy places by the efficacy of this atoning blood of Jesus: [Having that] new-discovered and ever-living way,<sup>b</sup> which he hath consecrated for us through the veil,<sup>c</sup> that is, by means of his flesh, or of that human nature in which he hath veiled his Divine glories, and to which it ever becomes us to pay a regard in our access to God. And [having] also such a great 21 and glorious Priest over the house of God, who most faithfully manages his Father's concerns, and bears a most tender regard to ours; Let us 22 not stand at a distance as if God were inaccessible; but, on the contrary, let us draw near with a sincere and affectionate heart, in the full assurance of faith, supported by such considerations as these, which may well embolden us, (conscious as we are of our own unworthiness,) to make our approach unto him in the most cheerful expectation of his blessing. Only let us take care that this approach be made in a regular and proper manner, as ever we desire to meet with Divine favour and acceptance; particularly, as the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the Israelites; to cleanse them from any pollutions they might have contracted, so let us see to it that we come, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, free from all allowed guilt and indulged sin. And this is indeed our case, if we are true Christians: our*

<sup>b</sup> *New and living way.*] Dr. Owen illustrates this, by observing that the blood of other sacrifices was to be used immediately upon its effusion; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use, to be offered or sprinkled: but the blood of Christ is, as it were, always warm, having the same spirit of life and sanctification moving in it. So that the way of approach by it is said to be *ζωα και αιμα*, *living, yet*, (putting it for Christ who is the *Way*;) always, as it were, *newly slain*. See Owen on the Spirit, p. 386.

<sup>c</sup> *The veil.*] It is well known, that the veil was a curtain separating the holy from the most holy place. The priest could not pass to the sanctuary, unless he passed through it; so Christ could not pass into heaven as our High Priest, till he had taken human flesh in his way; and till it had been, as it were, put aside by death. And I cannot forbear thinking, that it may farther refer to the Shechinah being veiled by this curtain, which bore so remarkable an analogy to the Divine glory of Christ, as veiled by assuming human nature

ECTI  
XIV.  
Heb.  
X. 23.

hearts are thus sprinkled by the purifying and cleansing blood of Jesus, as well as *our bodies in baptism washed with pure water*,<sup>d</sup> intended to represent our being cleansed from sin. And since we have received such benefits by the gospel which we have embraced, *let us hold fast the profession of [our] hope*,<sup>e</sup> without ever giving way to the pressure and agitation of any temptation, or *wavering* in a case where we have such certain and indubitable evidence; for we know that whatever storms and tempests may arise, *he [is] assuredly faithful who hath promised*; he will stand by to defend us, and to make

bodies washed with pure water.

24 us more than conquerors over all. *And let us consider each other*, and reflect seriously on the circumstances in which we and our brethren are situated, that we may judge what influence we can have over them for their advantage, and may endeavour accordingly *to provoke*, and stimulate them on *to the exercise of sincere love*, and to a readiness *to all good works*, by our exhortations, and especially by our example and by such a conduct towards them as may engage the return of their affection, and the exertion 25 of their zeal for the general good: *Not deserting the assembling ourselves together*,<sup>f</sup> for the solemn purposes of public worship, *as the manner of some now [is]* in order to decline that reproach and persecution which the attendance on such assemblies may draw after it; *but exhorting and comforting [one another]* as much

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised.)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works.

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and

<sup>d</sup> *Bodies washed with pure water.* Mr. Pierce would make this the beginning of another sentence; and having *washed our bodies with pure water*; that is, "having been solemnly devoted to God in baptism, let us answer the engagements of that holy ordinance by holding fast the profession of our faith, &c. considering that he is faithful to the engagements he was pleased to seal unto us by it." But I think the sense will be very easy and intelligible, if it be connected with the preceding words, as referring to the custom of washing their bodies in clean water, before they *went* to worship at the temple, especially upon their solemn days.

<sup>e</sup> *Holden on [our] hope.* Instead of *our hope*, our translators read *our faith*, upon the authority only of a single manuscript. See Dr. Mills in loc.

<sup>f</sup> *Assembling ourselves together.* Mr. Pierce is of opinion, that when the apostle adds, *as the manner of some is*, he intends to blame the conduct of the Jews, who on account of their old prejudices against the Gentile converts, absented themselves from the assemblies into which they were admitted; and perhaps also to censure a similar behaviour in the Gentile converts arising from prejudices they had newly contracted against the Jews. And he imagines this, in some measure, is intimated by the use of the word *εἰσέρχονται*. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 1.) But I think the account given of the ground of this caution in the paraphrase, is on the whole much more certain.

so much the more as we can; and this so much the rather, as we see the day approaching; that awful day, in which we must appear before the tribunal of God, and that day of vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which Christ hath described as so terrible an emblem of it. And let none, who would not share with the enemies of Christ in the destruction which shall be poured out upon them, abandon his people now, and basely betray that cause and interest, by which none shall on the whole be losers, whatever they may for the present suffer on its account.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can be more desirable than to approach to God! what more effectually encourage that approach, than the consideration which the apostle here urges: *the new and living way which this great High-Priest hath consecrated!* Let us then see to it that we thus approach in the way of his own appointment. But if we desire acceptance, let us attend to the strength of our faith, and the purity of our consciences; that inward purity, without which our baptismal washing will stand us in little stead. To establish us in a resolution of retaining the profession of our faith and hope, amidst all the attempts that may be made to wrest it out of our hands, let us often reflect on the importance of those promises we have received, and the infallible fidelity of that God, who hath condescended to enter himself into such engagements. Let the community of that blessed hope which these sacred engagements afford, unite us in the bonds of the most affectionate love. Instead of watching over each other for evil, let us consider one another's circumstances with the most friendly and compassionate eye. And whatever we behold of necessity or distress, let us immediately be instigated and quickened kindly to attempt relief and assistance; that every one may be, as it were, in a confederacy against the evil by which any one may be attacked.

Much will this benevolent disposition be promoted, by a diligent attendance on the ordinances of religious worship; and much is it to be lamented, that it is the manner of so many to forsake them, even the assemblies which are honoured with the promise of the Divine presence; a promise, to the accomplish-

[*Day approaching.*] They knew that the day of Christ's final judgment, being certainly future, came nearer and nearer. And from what Christ had said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as to happen in the lives of some who had been present with him about thirty years before the date of this epistle, (compare Mat. xxi. 28.) they might infer that that was now near, though they should not have been able to trace it up into its causes, or to calculate the exact time.

ment of which thousands can bear testimony. Let us guard against so ungrateful and pernicious a neglect; and set ourselves to promote as far as possible, *mutual edification*; and so much the rather, as we see the day approaching, that solemn day, when all our opportunities in this world being come to a period, we must render up an account of all. It is a day, in which God will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil; let us therefore give all diligence to prepare ourselves for it; and remember how happily the ordinances of public worship are calculated to promote that preparation.

## S E C T. XV.

*The apostle enforces his exhortation steadily to adhere to their Christian faith, by reminding them of the extremities they had endured in its defence, and of the fatal consequences of apostasy Heb. X. 26, to the end.*

### HEBREWS X. 26.

**I HAVE** urged you to a steadiness and courage in the profession of the Christian faith, and have cautioned you against neglecting those acts of public worship by which it is professed, on any consideration whatsoever. And I must continue to inculcate the caution with the greatest seriousness: *for if we sin wilfully* and presumptuously by apostatising, *after having received the knowledge of the truth* with such incontestable evidence and power, *there remaineth yet no more sacrifice for sin*:<sup>b</sup> nor is it possible to find any atonement that shall be efficacious, after having thus ungratefully and wickedly disowned that which God had appointed. But on the contrary, all that remaineth is *a certain fearful expectation of the judgment of God, and of his fiery indignation, which is just ready to devour the adversaries* of his gospel, and shall, in a very little time, be poured out upon them in all its terrors.

HEBREWS X. 26.

FOR if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

\* *If we sin wilfully.*] The emphasis of the apostle's argument must lead us to interpret this of apostasy from Christianity. But as Diodate well observes, it might perhaps be expressed in this more general manner, to intimate how carefully we ought to guard against every degree of wil-

ful sin, lest it should lead to that dreadful conclusion.

<sup>b</sup> *No more sacrifice for sin.*] This plainly intimates, as Dr. Bates (Harm. p. 217.) well observes, that God will not pardon sin without *some sacrifice* or satisfaction; else the argument would be inconclusive.

28 He that despised  
Moses' law, died  
y, un-  
se wit-

29 Of how much  
severer punishment,  
suppose ye, shall he  
be thought worthy,  
who hath trodden  
under foot the Son  
of God, and hath  
counted the blood of  
the covenant where-  
with he was sanctified,  
an unholy thing,

This we might easily infer from the nature of things, even though we had not been so expressly warned of it in the word of God. For if *any one*, of whatever order and dignity, who set at nought the law of Moses,<sup>c</sup> by any presumptuous transgression of it, though that transgression might in itself seem ever so small, died without mercy [on the evidence of] two or three witnesses, and was excluded any benefit from those sin-offerings which were appointed for offences of ignorance and inconsideration: Of *how much severer punishment do ye suppose he shall be counted worthy, who hath* not merely insulted a faithful servant, but even trampled upon<sup>d</sup> the Son of God, and who hath not only slighted the method of reconciliation and purification which God hath appointed for lower purposes, but hath accounted the sacred blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified,<sup>e</sup> and solemnly set apart to the service of God, a common or an unclean thing, like the blood of a malefactor justly executed for his crimes? Now this he certainly doth who rejects the gospel; which cannot possibly be done without the greatest imaginable outrage to the memory of its Divine Author, who; had he not indeed been the extraordinary Person he professed himself to be, would deservedly have been reckoned among the most detestable of impostors. And such an offence is in present circum-

<sup>c</sup> Set at nought the law of Moses.] This evidently alludes to that very important precept, Numb. xv. 30, 31, which doomed to certain death every one who offended with an high hand; that is, who was guilty of any wilful, deliberate, and presumptuous sin, whether in matters great or small; though a plea of ignorance or inconsideration was allowed where the rebellion and presumption was not made apparent by any overt act. And this was the foundation of the sin-offering, which was in some degree analogous to the smaller punishment inflicted among us, for a crime, in other circumstances, capital, where benefit of clergy is sought and admitted.

<sup>d</sup> Trampled upon.] As it appears to me, that this is a description of a case that could only occur where what was properly the sin against the Holy Ghost

was committed, that is, ascribing the miracles wrought by his power to magic, and the operation of demons, I have paraphrased these words agreeable to that principle.

<sup>e</sup> By which he was sanctified.] As it could not on any principles be certainly inferred, that every one who thus apostatized from Christianity had been truly renewed, I think it very apparent, that this sanctification must only refer to his being externally set apart, or consecrated to God; though I will not certainly say, how far it may, as Bishop Hoadly has thought, refer to the sacramental wine representing the blood of the covenant. Hoadly on Epist. p. 453. Some have interpreted it, of the blood whereby Christ was sanctified, or dedicated by God as a High Priest. Compare John x. 36; xvii. 19. But the former sense seems to me more natural

# 80 For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God.

stantes the more aggravated, as it is plain, that he who commits it, has offered the most contemptuous injury to the Spirit of grace, by whose miraculous and saving operations the truth of the gospel is demonstrated, to such a degree, that the highest blasphemy against him must virtually be expressed by such a conduct as we here suppose.

Heb.  
X. 29.

- 30 Avoid therefore all approaches to this with the most solicitous care, for the Divine justice is not to be trifled with: as we know him that hath said, (Dent. xxxii. 35, 36.) *Vengeance [belongeth] to me: I will render recompense, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord will judge his people;*<sup>1</sup> and if he vindicate and avenge the injury done to them, he will much more severely animadvert upon those which are offered to his Spirit and his Son. Now surely you must immediately be sensible that *[it is] dreadful indeed to fall into the hands of the living God;* who living for ever, can for ever punish, in what degree he pleases, the wretched creatures, who have made themselves the objects of his final displeasure.

30 For we him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith Lord. And again The Lord shall judge his people.

- 32 But I humbly hope, you will be delivered from so terrible a ruin; and that you may, I will lead back your thoughts to former events, which, if duly considered, may be very instructive, and may prove the means of establishing you in your resolution of adhering to the gospel. And I must particularly urge you to call to remembrance the former days, in which having been enlightened,<sup>2</sup> with the knowledge of Christianity; and solemnly engaged in the pro-

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illumined

<sup>1</sup> The Lord will judge his people, &c.] The connection seems plainly to require this interpretation; and it agrees very well with the purpose for which it is here introduced. Very few commentators have considered it in this view; yet since I wrote this, I find Mr. Cradock, (Apost. Hist. p. 3879) gives it the same sense, And Balthus, (Annot. in loc.) hath produced a passage from Xenophon, in which the original word *κρινει* will judge, is used to signify vindicating, or pronouncing sentence in favour of.

<sup>2</sup> Having been enlightened.] By some this is understood of baptism; and it is

certain the fathers use the phrase in that sense. But I see no reason from scripture, for limiting it to that interpretation; or supposing, as Diodate himself does, there was any efficacy in baptism to enlighten, any more than to regenerate. Though as it was indeed the ordinance by which persons were solemnly entered into the list of those, who were in the main, and in the judgment of charity enlightened and regenerated, my respect for the opinion of so many eminent persons, ancient and modern, has determined me to hint at the sense they have generally given to it in the paraphrase.

2 nated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:

33 Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 For ye had comparison of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that

session of it by baptism, *you endured a great contest of sufferings<sup>b</sup>, struggling and contending as for your lives, or what indeed was much more valuable: Partly as ye were made a public spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions, like men exposed on a theatre as infamous; and partly as ye were made partakers with those who were so treated, and most affectionately appeared in the defence of the Divine cause, at the greatest hazard as well as expence.*

And indeed I have reason to speak this upon 34 my own knowledge *for ye sympathized with me in my bonds; and ye took the plunder of your goods, not only with patience; but with joy, knowing in yourselves that you have, upon the security of the gospel-promises, a far better, and an enduring substance in the heavens, where eternal riches and felicity await you, when all the possessions of earth are lost, and all its sorrows come to a perpetual period.*

Let the remembrance of these things there- 35 fore animate you to persist in such heroic resolutions; and *cast not away that confidence of yours, and that free and courageous profession of it, which hath so great and glorious a recompense entailed upon it; even that of eternal life and happiness, which the Divine goodness will bestow as a gracious reward on all who thus maintain it. It will indeed be necessary, that 36 in order to secure it, you should take up a firm and vigorous resolution: for ye have still need of continued patience, that having done the will of God, during this short state of probation here, ye may receive and inherit the promise of life and salvation, to which ye have already expressed such a firm regard. And I hope you will still 37 go on to maintain the glorious cause; for it is but yet a very little time, and as God declared by the prophet Habakkuk, though he supposes he might for a while tarry, (Hab. ii. 3.) he that cometh, he that is known by that illustrious title*

<sup>b</sup> *A great contest.*] This is the emphatical signification of the word *ἀγωνία*, which gives a view of their courage and bravery very proper for his purpose, while he was thus commending and animating them.

<sup>c</sup> *Yet a little time.*] Some would render it, *a little, a very little time.*—It has been observed, that *ἐπεὶ ταῦτα, ὁ ἔρχεται*, is a title given to the Messiah, Mat. x. 41.



## 82 For if any draw back, God will have no pleasure in him.

SECT. of the Comer, even the Lord Jesus Christ him- shall come will come, and will not tarry.

XV. self, on whom our eyes and our hopes are fixed, will come to the rescue of his people, and he will

Heb. not delay beyond the period which his wisdom and faithfulness have marked out. He will come and open those important scenes, which shall not only conclude our labours and sufferings,

38 but abundantly repay them all. But in the mean time, as it is there added, *the just shall live by his faith*, so we are assured by the repeated testimony of the word of God, that the truly good man shall by firm faith in the Divine perfections, promises, and grace, obtain justification, and comfort, life and happiness. Yet if ye draw back<sup>k</sup>, my soul, saith the same Divine oracle, shall have no complacency in him: a total apostasy would expose even the best of men to the Divine displeasure and abhorrence; as former experiences of religion would render the guilt

39 of such apostasy more aggravated. But blessed be God, we have a cheerful hope of being preserved from so terrible a state; for *we are not of them that draw back* to such dreadful destruction, but of them that go on amidst all opposition still to believe; and sustained by Divine grace, will persevere in that happy way, to the preservation and complete salvation of the soul.

38 Now the just shall live by faith but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 26 We see the dreadful consequences of sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth; how diligently should we guard against every, even the least appearance of it! Should we fall into so great an evil, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin; and O how dreadful, to lose our part in that great sacrifice, and be consigned over to a certain fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation! but blessed be God, it is not yet our case. It is not every wilful sin which thus seals up the wretched soul to condemnation; for who then could hope for heaven? or who in the utter despair of heaven, could enjoy this world? may we not say, who could endure it?

If we would avoid this dreadful doom, let us guard against

<sup>k</sup> Yet if ye draw back.] We render the phrase in Habakkuk, *lifted up*. And it is observable, that the alteration of a single letter changes the reading into this sense in which the Seventy have taken it.—The original word *ὑποκαταστήσω* properly signifies to *sneak* or to *slink away*. Acts xx. 20; Gal. ii. 12.

every approach toward any thing which might be interpreted <sup>sect.</sup> treading under foot the Son of God, or doing despite unto the <sup>21</sup> Spirit of grace. On the contrary, let us ever retain the most <sup>Verse</sup> reverend affection for the Son of God, and ever cherish the influences of the Spirit. So shall we avoid the threatened vengeance, and escape that infinitely dreadful thing, the falling into <sup>29</sup> the hands of the living God. <sup>31</sup>

To have experienced in any degree the power and efficacy of religion, is the great preservative against apostasy. They who have already, like those believing Hebrews, made great sacrifices <sup>32</sup> to their conscience, ought to feel the force of the obligation. The struggles through which they have already passed, the combats they have already maintained, should have a powerful influence on their future resolution, that they may not stain the lustre of their former victories.

If such trials be appointed for us, may our faith be proportionably strengthened; that we may take joyfully, not only the spoil- <sup>34</sup> ing of our goods, but the torture of our bodies; *knowing that we have in heaven a better and more enduring substance* than worldly wealth, and a far more glorious abode than these tabernacles of clay. Let the recompence of reward be kept continually in our <sup>35</sup> view; that thereby that patience may be supported, of which we ever stand in such evident need, that *after we have done the will of God, we may go to inherit the promises.*

Let the certain and speedy approach of him that is to come, <sup>37</sup> daily comfort us, and confirm the faith by which we live; and let us still pour out our fervent supplications before God, that we may not draw back, which if we do, it will be infinitely fatal. Then instead of beholding us with complacency, God's soul will <sup>38</sup> abhor us; and that abhorrence will be proportionable to our violated engagements, and dishonoured profession. Perdition pursues our retreat. Let every consideration therefore, of honour, of gratitude, of interest, and of safety, concur to urge us on, and to support the steadiness of our faith, till we receive the glorious <sup>39</sup> crown of it, in the complete salvation of our souls.

## SECTION. XVI.

*The apostle enters on a discourse, in which he proposes to the Hebrews illustrious examples of faith, which had appeared in holy men mentioned in their scriptures, and particularly in Abel, Enoch, Noah; and Abraham and Sarah. Heb. XI. 1—16.*

### HEBREWS XI. 1.

<sup>HEBREWS XI. 1.</sup> **N**OW faith is the **I** HAVE spoken of the faith by which the just shall live; and that I may excite you to cultivate that blessed principle more and more, let

84 *By faith we learn, the worlds were made by the word of God.*

**sect.** me *now* enter into a more distinct consideration  
**xvi.** of it, and set before your eyes, O ye believing  
**Heb.** Hebrews, some glorious examples of it, with  
**xi. 1.** which your sacred history abounds. To consider it then in its nature; *faith is the confident expectation<sup>a</sup> of things hoped for*, upon the security of the Divine promise, and *the powerful conviction<sup>b</sup> of things which are not seen*; but of whose certainty and importance there is such a full persuasion, that they act upon the mind, in a great measure, as if they were present.

substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 To this I would excite you, by considerations peculiarly suited to your own case, as the children of the patriarchs; *for by it the illustrious elders obtained an [honourable] testimony* to their character, and it lay at the root of many of the most glorious things they have ever done.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were adjusted by the word of God;*<sup>c</sup> and the several revolutions of them directed by the operations of his secret providence, *as the whole universe was at first created by his power, wisdom, and goodness, and the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear:*<sup>d</sup> it is certain

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

<sup>a</sup> [Confident expectation.] Compare 2 Cor. ix. 4; Heb. iii. 14; where the word *προσδοκία* is used in this sense; and Raphaelius has confirmed it by some pertinent quotations from Polybius.

<sup>b</sup> The powerful conviction of things not seen: *ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἀπιστίας* [ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἀπιστίας] *ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἀπιστίας*, it hath been observed by many learned men, and particularly by Raphaelius in loc. is a strict proof or demonstration, that is, saith Mr. Hallet, such a kind of reason and argument, as both convinces the understanding, and engages a man to act according to that conviction. Accordingly I have rendered it by the word *conviction*, which I think properly expresses the apostle's meaning.

<sup>c</sup> That the worlds were adjusted by the word of God.] As the original word is *κτίσις*, I was once inclined to have rendered it, the various *ages* of the world were adjusted; and I have included this sense in the paraphrase. But it does not so evidently appear, that the consequence, relating to things not being made by those that appear, could be deduced from that principle: I therefore conclude upon the whole; that this is an instance where *κτίσις*

signifies world; as is often translated in the New Testament. Bishop Pearson would translate it, *were made of things which do not appear*, that is, made out of nothing, without any pre-existent matter, before God created the worlds. Pearson on the Creed, p. 54.

<sup>d</sup> As—the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear; *οὐκ ἐκ τῶν φανερῶν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ ἀφανοῦς*.] Our translators have rendered this clause, *So that the things which are seen &c.* But this does not seem to be sufficiently agreeable either to the original, or to the design of the apostle; which was not to deduce the sentiment contained in the latter clause as an inference from the former; but rather to establish the position in the first part of the verse, by the principle laid down in the latter. Accordingly I have given it this turn in the paraphrase, and have taken the liberty to translate *οὐκ ἐκ τῶν φανερῶν*, which clearly expresses, I apprehend, the apostle's intention. The construction of Rom. iv. 16, is somewhat similar to this; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως ἡ χάρις*, that is “that it might appear to be of

no visible cause could produce these things, which would be in effect to suppose them to have produced themselves; we therefore by faith refer them to a Divine invisible original.

4) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh.

And this happy and sublime principle hath wrought even from the beginning of the world, and animated good men to actions most pleasing to God, and honourable to themselves. It was, for instance, by faith that Abel offered to God a greater and more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; by means of which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous; God, by the visible tokens of his favour, bearing witness to his gifts, which he presented on the altar; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh; and recommends to us in all ages that regard to the great atonement, which he expressed by bringing an animal sacrifice, while Cain contented himself with the vegetable products of the ground. And though Abel became the early victim of Cain's rage, yet that circumstance, in conjunction with the declaration he received of the Divine acceptance and favour, is very instructive, in that it affords so powerful an evidence of a future state.

5 By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not

By faith the celebrated patriarch Enoch was in a miraculous manner, translated from among men; so that he should not see death; and he was not found any longer among the inhabitants of

grace, as we have already proved it is." The apostle's intention was, by the latter clause as an uncontroverted principle to establish what he had now wanted to prove, namely, that justification was by faith; and this he does from the consideration of its being by grace. It may be proper to consult Mr. Hallet on Heb. vi. 3, note 7; who refers to Eph. i. 12; and 1 Cor. x. 6: where the apostle's words are, &c. cannot signify any thing but to the intent that.

\* A greater and more excellent sacrifice.] A late ingenious writer, Mr. Kennicott, (in his Two Dissertations on the Tree of Life and the Oblations of Cain and Abel, p. 197.) has inferred from the word *θυσία*, which may be rendered a greater or fuller sacrifice, that Cain contented himself with presenting only the *mincha*, or bread-offering, without a victim; whereas Abel sacrificed both, and by presenting a lamb, shewed his faith in the great sacrifice of the lamb of God.—After

all that has been offered to the contrary, I must think that the Divine original of sacrifices is strongly insinuated in this place.

[Dead, yet speaketh.] Some would render it, And for this they say he died, that is, there is a tradition that he was massacred by Cain, in a dispute about the recompense of a future life, which faith proposes. Saurin's Sermons, Vol. IX, page 54. I rather think it refers to the testimony borne, as it were, to a future state, by his story, as he was so excellent a person, and visibly approved by God, yet left to suffer by the cruelty of his wicked brother. Some would render *κατάλειπε*, he is spoken of to this day, as a person of most eminent piety and goodness.

[Was not found.] The circumstances of his translation are not mentioned; but some have thought this intimates he was privately translated, and sought for, as Elijah afterwards was, 2 Kings ii. 17.

86 *By faith Noah prepared an ark for saving his house :*

sect. this lower world, because God hath translated  
xvi. him to the celestial regions, in a manner before  
altogether unexampled, nor ever since equalled  
among mortals, but in the single instance of  
Elijah. And God thus translated him, not only  
because he had a regard for his character, but  
because he would by such an interposition, give  
a visible and very important lesson to others, to  
seek and secure his favour by the exercise of  
such a disposition. *For before his translation, he  
obtained witness that he pleased God;* preceding  
tokens were given of God's favourable regards  
to him; and that character is expressed by the  
sacred historian when it is said, (Gen. v. 24.)  
that Enoch walked with God; that is, he main-  
tained a constant regard to him, and received  
the indication of his favour; so that there sub-  
sisted a holy intercourse and friendship between

found, because God  
had translated him  
for before his trans-  
lation he had this  
testimony, that he  
pleased God.

6 God and Enoch. *But without a sincere faith,*  
as the great principle of action, [it is] absolute-  
ly impossible to please [him;] *for he who ap-  
proacheth to God,* and pretends to walk with him,  
must, as the foundation of that intercourse firm-  
ly believe that he exists, and [that] he is the re-  
warder of them that diligently seek him, and will  
bestow some peculiar and important blessings  
upon them. For where there are no such expect-  
ations as these, the soul cannot be animated to  
the labours and struggles of a truly religious life.

6 But without faith  
it is impossible to  
please him: for he  
that cometh to God,  
must believe that he  
is, and that he is a  
rewarder of them  
that diligently seek  
him.

7 *By faith the patriarch Noah, the second com-  
mon ancestor of mankind, being admonished by a  
Divine oracle, concerning things which were not  
yet seen, and things of such a nature; that no  
one had ever seen or heard of any thing parallel  
to them, the dissolution of the world by a flood,  
and the destruction of all its inhabitants, believ-  
ed and revered the awful threatening. And be-  
ing impressed with a pious, and, in that connec-  
tion, most rational fear of the Divine judgments,*

7 By faith Noah  
being warned of God  
of things not seen  
as yet, moved with

<sup>b</sup> *Approacheth to God,* and pretends to  
walk with him.] Raphellius hath shewn,  
that the original word *εὐσεβέω* is  
applied in the Greek classics, to coming  
to God by prayer; and it is used in chap.  
x. 1. 22; and xii. 22, 23; for approaching  
to God in any act of Divine worship. He  
therefore justly observes, that it may here

be taken in a larger sense, and refer to  
that steady course of piety and virtue,  
which is implied in *pleasing God*, or walk-  
ing with him, as in the former verse Enoch  
is said to have done; and which in the  
preceding clause, it is declared to be im-  
possible for any one to do without faith.

feet, prepared swark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

with immense labour and cost, amidst all the insults of profane and wicked men, prepared an ark, which God taught him to build, for the salvation of his house and family; by means of which he condemned the unbelieving world, by bearing a public and convincing testimony against them. And thus he became heir of the righteousness which is obtained by faith: he was pronounced by God a righteous person, though his character was not absolutely free from imperfections, and became by divine grace entitled to the promise of eternal life, of which his temporal deliverance, though so amazing, was only an emblem.

Heb. xi. 1.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

By faith, that illustrious patriarch Abraham, from whom you justly esteem it a peculiar honour and happiness to be descended, being called by the God of glory, who appeared to him, to go out from his father's house and native land, to a distant place, which God promised that he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed without disputing or murmuring, and went out, though he knew not at all whither he was going, or to which part of the world he was to steer his course, humbly resigning himself to Divine Providence to mark out his journey and his abode. By faith, he sojourned all

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

the remainder of his days in the land of promise, when he knew it to be so, as [in] a strange country without having any property there, unless it was that of a sepulchre towards the close of his life; dwelling in tents, easily moved from one place to another, some part of the time with Isaac and Jacob; who, in their succession, were heirs with him of the same promise, and depositories of it; yet led the same kind of wandering life. But he passed from place to place with cheerfulness; for he expected at length to be led on to a city, and that not such a one as

10 For he looked

[Condemned the world.] It is plain that here, as in many other places, a person is said to condemn those against whom he furnishes out matter of accusation, in which view Titus iii. 11, may be understood. See the note there.

[Heir of the righteousness.] Bishop Cumberland observes, that Noah is the first to whom the name of righteous man

is applied in scripture. Cumb. Orig. Gent. p. 418.

[With Isaac and Jacob.] It is plain, from the account of the lives of the patriarchs, that Jacob was born fifteen years before Abraham died: and the oracle given to Isaac before the birth of his children, would sufficiently intimate to Abraham that he was the heir of the promise.

SECT.  
xvi.  
Heb.  
xi. 10.

he had left in his native land, or such as he saw in Canaan, or even in Egypt, grand and populous as some of their buildings were, the object of his joyful and confident expectation, was that city, which alone hath firm and immovable foundations, in comparison with which they were but like a frail tabernacle; a city, of which God [is] the builder and former, who drew and executed the grand plan, and laid out upon it all the richest ornaments, which might raise it to a magnificence, worthy of his own abode, and the inheritance of his beloved children.

for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- 11 *By faith, Sarai herself, notwithstanding some mixture of suspicion, at length, as the worthy consort of such an husband, and worthy mother of such an offspring, received strength for the conception of seed, and brought forth a child beyond the due time of age for such a purpose, when she was ninety years old, and in the course of nature absolutely incapable of being a mother; because she accounted him who had promised, to be the faithful and Almighty God, who could with infinite ease accomplish an event, which then seemed to be, and indeed was unparallel.* Therefore by this mighty principle of faith in her, and in Abraham, there sprang even from one father, and he in this respect, as it were, dead, [a posterity] in multitude as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable,<sup>10</sup> according to that Divine promise, which carried its efficacy into so many remoter ages, and retains it even to this day.

11 Through faith also Sarai herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

- 13 Now all these worthy and excellent persons, of whom I have here been speaking died in faith, not having received [the] blessings exhibited in the promises, but having seen them afar off, and having been fully persuaded [of them,] and embraced [them] with the most cordial affection, and greatest ardour of mind, and having, through the

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,

<sup>10</sup> In multitude as the stars of heaven, &c.] Mr. Hallet observes here a great propriety in the apostle's saying, that they should be in multitude as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore innumerable: there being an impossibility of numbering the latter, whereas the former, since they have been reduced into

constellations, have been numbered with a considerable degree of exactness. See Hallet in loc. where he endeavours to account, consistently with this observation, for Psal. cxlvii. 4. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, as if this were the peculiar prerogative of God.

*These all desired a better country, that is, an heavenly.* 89

and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth sect. xvi. Heb. XI. 13.

14 For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country

15 And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have re-

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; for the land of the living is such a country, which they seem to have been pursuing. And indeed this is the great excellence of their character, to be governed by such views, therefore God, determined to bestow this happy land upon them, and he is not ashamed to be called their God, in such a peculiar manner, as he has assumed the title, because he hath prepared them such a city as they sought; whereas if he had done nothing more for them than he did here upon earth, it would have been beneath his dignity to have professed that relation, as the title naturally imports something great and excellent, far beyond what these patriarchs received, and indeed what any can possibly receive in this mortal and transitory life.

<sup>a</sup> Seek a country *waspida* } The original word is very emphatical, it signifies, as it were a native country, or a country in which their fathers dwelt, and is opposed to that in which they were strangers and pilgrims.

<sup>b</sup> Better country, that is, an heavenly } The argument, according to the turn I have given it, is much the same with that which our Lord urges, Mat. xxii. 3?



## IMPROVEMENT.

SECT.

XVI.

LET the many glorious examples of faith, which are here set before us, animate our souls to imitation, and excite in us a generous desire of acting upon that noble and sublime principle, without which it is impossible to please God. And O, may what we call our faith be not merely a speculative and ineffectual assent to the truth, even of the most weighty propositions; but a firm persuasion of their certainty, and a deep conviction of their importance, that we also may obtain a good report.

3 May we believe in God, as the former and support of universal nature, as most assuredly existing, and as most bountifully rewarding all that seek him with sincerity and diligence. So shall our sacrifices be acceptable to him, as those of Abel were, while with him we look to that great sacrifice and atonement, of which his victim was the appointed representation. Like Enoch we shall then be animated to walk with God, and favoured with divine intercourse and communications. And though we cannot expect a translation like his, which should exempt us from the common lot of mortality, we shall be secure of admission into the paradise of God above, and in due time shall ascend to it in our complete persons. We shall then, like Noah, find our safety in the midst of a dissolving world, and while sinners are condemned, be found the heirs of righteousness.

8 While we wait for this happiness, let us endeavour to approve ourselves the genuine children of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Ever attentive to the Divine call, may we in obedience to it, be willing to go forth, though we do not particularly know whither; and with an intrepidity like his, may we even be ready to exchange worlds, at the command of God, ignorant as we are of what lies beyond the grave; thinking it enough, that we know it is a land which God hath promised as the inheritance of his children. It is indeed a city that hath foundations, in comparison of which all the most magnificent and established buildings of the children of men are but mean and moveable tents.

God boasts in the title of its builder and maker, having formed and fashioned it for the highest displays of his glory and his love; and in reference to it he is not ashamed to be called our God; for by bestowing it upon us, he answers all which that high and glorious title might import. May we ever desire this as our better country, and live as its citizens ought; confessing ourselves, in reference to it, to be pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. And though we here receive not the accomplishment of the promises, may we keep our eyes on the objects they exhibit, how distant soever they may seem; and being persuaded of them, may we embrace them; embrace them even with our dy-

ing arms, and breathe out our prepared and willing spirits, in full assurance that we are going to receive and possess them.

SECT.

XVI.

## S E C T. XVII.

*The apostle further illustrates upon examples and instances of faith in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. Heb XI. 17--29.*

## HEBREWS XI. 17.

HEB XI. 17.  
BY faith Abraham  
when he was tried  
offered up Isaac:  
and he that had re-  
ceived the promise,  
offered up his only-  
begotten son.

I HAVE already mentioned some glorious instances of the faith of Abraham, our illustrious progenitor; but I should be far from doing justice to my subject, if I were not to add another, the most celebrated of all. You will remember therefore, that it was *by faith* that Abraham was supported, *when he was tried*, in that most severe instance, and at the Divine command *offered* his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved; *yea, he who had received the promises*, which terminated not only in his seed, but in Isaac by name, *offered his only-begotten [son]* in whom they so centred, that they must necessarily have failed, if he had perished without any offspring. So that nothing seemed more difficult, on principles of common reason, than the reconciliation of the promise with the command. Even when he was destined to the altar, concerning whom it was said, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, (Gen. xxi. 12.) yet his triumphant faith surmounted even such an obstacle, and it was as wise and rational as it was pious and heroic: *Reasoning* within himself as he did, *that God was able even to raise [him] from the dead*, and consequently that he could have brought Isaac to life again, if he had really expired under the sacrificial knife, and been reduced to ashes: *from whence he received him even in a figure*. For as his production was a

SECT.

XVII.

Heb

XI. 17.

13. of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

14. Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

\* Reasoning that God was able even to raise him. Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that his faith was in this respect the more admirable, as, so far as we can learn, there never had been one single instance of a resurrection from the dead, or before the days of Abraham.

15. In a figure. Some

think this implies, that his birth was a kind of resurrection from the dead. But the learned Dr Warburton contends earnestly for it, that it was *parabolical* intimates, that the whole transaction was *parabolical* or *typical* of the method God would take for the salvation of men. The learned Wolfius is of the same opinion, (Cur.

SECT. miracle, raising him, as it were, from the dead  
 xvii. bodies of those who in a course of nature had  
 Heb. no hope of children; so he was in another sense  
 xl. 19. raised from the dead, when God gave him back  
 to Abraham in the mount, in that awful transac-  
 tion, in which was so significant a representa-  
 tion of Christ's day, (John viii. 56,) and of the  
 method which God took for our redemption, in  
 the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son.

20 *By faith*, in a revelation which he then re-  
 ceived from God, under that superior direction,  
*Isaac* when advanced in age *blessed* his two chil-  
 dren, *Jacob and Esau*, and uttered some re-  
 markable oracles *concerning things long to come*,  
 and of such a nature, that no human foresight  
 could possibly reach them.

21 *By faith*, *Jacob*, when dying, *blessed each of*  
*the sons of Joseph*, in full dependence on the  
 Divine promise of an inheritance in Canaan;  
 appointing these his grand-children, tribes in  
 Israel: foretelling the superiority of Ephraim  
 the younger, to Manasseh the elder; and in  
 thankful acknowledgment of that Divine good-  
 ness, which he had so long experienced, at the  
 same time *worshipped*<sup>d</sup>, bowing down upon the  
*top of his staff*, with which he supported himself  
 as he sat on the side of his bed<sup>e</sup>.

20 By faith Isaac  
 blessed Jacob and  
 Esau concerning  
 things to come.

21 By faith Jacob,  
 when he was a dying,  
 blessed both the sons  
 of Joseph; and wor-  
 shipped leaning upon  
 the top of his staff.

Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 762.) and observes,  
 in support of it, that the Greek word  
*μαρτυροῦμαι* answers to the Hebrew *עֵשָׂה*  
 and is so used by the Seventy; and that  
 the Hebrews are wont to say *עֵשָׂה*, in or  
 by a parable or figure when they would  
 express a typical representation. He ima-  
 gines this interpretation to be the more  
 probable, because the Apostle hath put a  
 mark of emphasis upon *μαρτυροῦμαι*, by  
 prefixing *καί* to it, even in a figure.

<sup>c</sup> *Blessed Jacob.*] He was persuaded  
 that God would one way or another make  
 good his promises to them, though he  
 could not certainly tell how, and was mis-  
 taken in the person.

<sup>d</sup> *Worshipped.*] He thought it so great  
 a privilege to be buried in the land of Ca-  
 naan, that he bowed his head, in token of  
 thankfulness for it; which was another  
 demonstration of faith in God's promise.  
 Gen. xlvii. 30, 31.

<sup>e</sup> *On the top of his staff*, as he sat on the  
 side of his bed. ] In the passage referred

to Gen. xlvii. 31. it is said according to  
 our English version, *Israel bowed himself*  
*upon his bed's head*. The Apostle says, he  
*worshipped upon the top of his staff*; and this  
 agrees with the Greek and Syriac trans-  
 lation; and Wolfius adds, that the  
 Seventy always render the Hebrew word  
*עֵשָׂה*; a staff. Mr. Hallet, there fore, in a  
 learned note upon this place, is of opinion  
 that the Hebrew word signifies either a  
*bed* or a *staff*; and that our English trans-  
 lators too implicitly followed the modern  
 Jews, and supposed it here to signify a  
*bed*, in opposition to the authority of the  
 Seventy and of the apostle. The passages  
 may possibly be reconciled, if there be  
 any occasion for it, by the circumstance  
 mentioned in the paraphrase, as it is not  
 likely that Jacob was now in *bed*, (see  
 Gen. xlvii. 29,) but he might very pro-  
 bably be sitting on the side of it. His  
 leaning on the *top of his staff* shows that  
 he was very old and feeble; and this cir-  
 cumstance, saith Mr. Hallet, is very per-

22 By faith Joseph when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Again, it was *by faith* that Joseph, when dying, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt as a fact which should certainly come to pass, though at a long distance of time; and then in token of his entire dependence upon it, and expectation of the inheritance they would then possess, he gave a charge concerning the carrying his bones with them, to be interred in the sepulchre of his fathers in Canaan.

SECT.  
XVII.  
Heb.  
XI. 22.

23 By faith Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

The case of our illustrious law-giver will also furnish us with farther glorious examples of that, which was in him a kind of hereditary virtue; for it was *by faith* that Moses, when he was just born, was hidden three months by his pious parents in their own house; because they saw [he was] a graceful child, who seemed by his aspect to promise something uncommon. And they therefore determined, if possible, to preserve his life, and feared not the commandment of the king, requiring all Israelitish parents, on pain of death, to give up their male children, that they might be thrown into the river.

24 By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

*By faith* this Moses, when he was grown up to maturity of age, and become great in the dignities and preferments of the Egyptian court, on full consideration of all that could be pleaded in favour of secular views, deliberately refused to be any longer called as he had before been, the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but boldly professed himself an Israelite, and interposed to vindicate his brethren from their oppression:

25 Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy

*Chusing much rather to partake with the people of God in their affliction, than to enjoy the tem-*

perment mentioned by the apostle, to intimate that feeble as he was, he would worship God in the best manner he was able.

(Grown up.) Some would more literally render it, *grown great*; that is, a great man in power and dignity. But the version I have preferred is justified by Eusebius Schultze, and by the learned Bos, who, in support of it, cites a remarkable passage from Homer, (Æneid. Philolog. p. 252.) and it appears by the account of Stephen, Acts xii. 23, that Moses was now forty years old. I have given a hint of both interpretations in the paraphrase. Some are of opinion that

this passage refers to the story which Josephus tells us, of his tramping on the crown when a boy; and that it is as if the apostle had said, "He did not do it as a puerile action, and when he understood not the value of things; but when he knew all the worth it could be supposed to have." See Tillotson's works, Vol. II. p. 20.—If Josephus's account be right, Pharaoh's daughter had no son of her own, and adopted him, with some view to make him successor to the crown, but I do not apprehend the laws of Egypt would have permitted that, as he was of foreign birth.

SECT. XVII. *porary and transient pleasures of sin; which he might have expected had he continued in that* the pleasures of sin for a season;

Heb. XI. 26. *magnificent, but corrupt court: Esteeming the reproach of Christ,\* the infamy that he might meet with in acknowledging himself one of the Israelites whom Christ had been pleased to take under his special protection, and whom God had acknowledged for his anointed people, greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt, though so opulent a kingdom: for he directed his regards to the recompense of reward,<sup>b</sup> which he expected to receive in the invisible and eternal world, and to possess, when princes shall have quitted their thrones, and all the pride of monarchs be* 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 laid low. It was also by faith, that he left Egypt in that resolute and heroic manner; not fearing the wrath of the king,<sup>c</sup> when he charged him on pain of death to see his face no more; but before he went, boldly predicted the destruction of the first-born, which was to follow all the dreadful judgments already executed; for he was inwardly strengthened to this dignity and steadiness of conduct, as seeing him who is the great invisible Being, ever present to the eye of the believing mind, and whose presence and friendship is of such infinite importance, that he who fixes his regards on him, will never by any consideration be influenced to offend him, nor much impressed with the fear of any thing that would tempt him to do this. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

\* *Reproach of Christ.*] There are some who understand this of the reproach of Israel, God's anointed people, and so would render it, *the reproach of the anointed*; but I rather apprehend, considering the sense in which this name is everywhere else used by the apostle, that it refers to the relation in which Christ stood to Israel, as his peculiar people; so that reproach borne on their account was borne for him. (Compare 1 Cor. x. 9;) and Mr. Fleming, (Christology, Vol. I. p. 109,) urges this as an argument for Christ's existence before the time of Moses. Du Mont supposes that the Israelites expected deliverance by the Messiah, and that the Egyptians insulted them on that account: and it is certain, reproach borne on the account of Christ, may be, and is called the reproach of Christ. Compare Heb. xiii. 13; Du Mont's Sermon. p. 151—155. And

for the illustration of this he quotes, and by this key explains, Psal lxxxix. 50—52.

<sup>b</sup> *Recompense of reward.*] That reward could not be temporal grandeur, which he might have had with much greater security and advantage in Egypt; nor the possession of Canaan, which he never saw. It must therefore be the eternal inheritance, which was discovered to him by the principle here so largely described and recommended.

<sup>c</sup> *Fearing the wrath of the king.*] As it is so expressly said, (Exod. ii. 14, 15.) that when he first quitted Egypt, and went to sojourn in Midian, he was afraid; I apprehend the assertion of the apostle, that he did not fear the wrath of the king, refers to the instance mentioned in the paraphrase.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

By faith that God would assuredly send his angel on the vindictive design foretold, and spare the houses properly distinguished, he celebrated the passover, and the pouring forth the blood of the lamb, which he sprinkled on the lintels, and the posts of the doors, as the mark of committing those who dwell under such roofs to the Divine protection; that he who destroyed the first-born, might not touch them, under the security of that peaceful sign: an emblem of the safety we expect by means of the blood of Jesus, the true and great passover, who is sacrificed for us.

SECT. XVII.  
Heb. XI. 28.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

Again, by faith operating in Moses, and in its degree in them likewise, they passed over the Red sea<sup>k</sup>, sedately, as if they had marched on dry land, while its waters by the Divine command divided, and left the channel bare to them, so that they completed their march through it, and arrived safely on the opposite shore; which the Egyptians making an insolent and rash attempt to do, were all drowned, and sunk like lead in the mighty waters, which returned upon them with irresistible violence.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET these glorious instances of faith be preserved in our memory, and have their due influence upon our hearts. When God calls us to resign our dearest comforts, let us think of that heroic act of faith by which Abraham offered up Isaac, and seemed in him to sacrifice all the promises, as well as his son. Yet he therein acted a part the most strictly rational; as rightly concluding, that God could with infinite ease call him back to life again, and make a person, who had poured forth all his blood on the altar, and been reduced to ashes there, the father of many nations. Let dying parents commit their children to the care of the ever-living God, like Jacob; and worship him who hath fed them all their lives long, and who will never forsake those that put their trust in him. Let those who are called to glorify God, by opposing the unjust commands of great and powerful men, remember the parents of Moses, and remember their illustrious child. Does he now repent that wonderful choice that

Verse 17

20

21

<sup>k</sup> By faith they passed.] Mr. Saurin observes, with his usual delicacy, that since it very evidently appears, that of those who passed through the sea, there were some with whom God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. x. 5. we cannot infer, that all the

persons afterwards mentioned by name, as instances of faith, were, on the whole, in such a state of acceptance with him as to be entitled to his everlasting favour. Saurin's Sermon. Vol. IX. p. 47.

SECT. XVII. he made at an adult age? does he now wish that he had been called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter, rather than the servant of God, faithful in all his house? does he wish that he had secured the treasures of Egypt, and the temporary pleasures of sin, and declined that reproach of Christ, which has ended in eternal glory? Our hearts, our consciences will soon answer; let us then, like him, have respect unto the recompense of reward.

Ver. 24. 25 26 27 Let us endeavour more frequently to direct our regards to God, and live as seeing him who is invisible.

And while our faith is thus viewing him, let us look with pleasure to the blood of sprinkling, which places us under his protection; which introduces us to his favour; which secures us from the destroying angel. He will lead us on safely to his heavenly Canaan, if we fall not by unbelief. He will open our passage through seas of difficulty; he will send down upon us every suitable supply, and would much sooner command the skies to rain down bread, or the flinty rock to melt into streams of water, than desert his people in the wilderness. Let all his wonders of power, and of love, to Israel of old, animate our faith: and let them all quicken our obedience; and under a sense of our own weakness, and the importance of this leading, this princely grace, let us daily pray, Lord, increase our faith!

### SECT. XVIII.

*The apostle concludes his discourse on faith, by hinting at many other glorious instances of it, and besides several recorded in scripture, refers also to the case of those who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Heb. XI. 30—XII. 2.*

#### HEBREWS XI. 30.

SECT. XVIII. I HAVE mentioned the faith which our forefathers exercised on the miraculous power of God to lead them out of Egypt, and through the Red sea; and I must farther observe, that they continued under the influence of the same principle when they came into the promised land: for it was by faith in those who marched round the strongly fortified walls of Jericho, following the ark, and who at the appointed signal blew the trumpet of rams-horns and shouted, that, contrary to all sensible appearances of possibility, they fell down, smitten by the hand of God, without any human force, having been only surrounded seven days in solemn silence, according

#### HEBREWS XI. 30.

BY faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

to the Divine command; how absurd a spectacle soever their procession might appear to the besieged. It was *by faith*, and in consequence of it, that *Rahab the harlot did not perish with the infidels* of that city among whom she dwelt; *having received the spies* hospitably and dismissed them *in peace*, when an alarm was taken by her fellow citizens, and they searched for them to destroy them. She therefore hazarded her own life to preserve theirs, believing them to be the servants of the Almighty Jehovah, and assuring herself that he could protect her in her efforts for their security, and could make them the means of delivering her and her family; which was accordingly the case.

Heb. XI. 31.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha: of David also and Samuel, and of the prophets:

*And what shall I say farther upon this copious, 32 this inexhaustible subject? for the time would fail me if I should attempt to discourse at large concerning Gideon, who with so small a band of men cut off so many thousands of the Midianites; and Barak, who freed Israel from the oppression of Jabin, and routed Sisera his general; and Samson, who slew so many thousands of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; and performed so many other astonishing achievements: I might also speak of the victory of Jephtha over the Ammonites, and the heroic acts of David, in his combat with Goliath, and his other frequent encounters with the enemies of God, and his Israel; and even Samuel, who though his character seemed more pacific, as a prophet and a judge, yet led on the armies of the Lord, on a remarkable occasion, to an illustrious victory. I might also enlarge on the celebrated histories of Elijah, Elisha, and others of the prophets, particularly Daniel, and the three young worthies, whose magnanimous history he hath particularly recorded.*

33 Who through faith subdued king-

*I will 33 not dwell on the history of those heroes who have transmitted their names to our age, and shall transmit them to all who are to come, with such distinguished honour; but shall content myself with observing, that it was by the exercise of this great principle, that they were raised to those sublime degrees of reputation and glory. It was *by faith* that some of them, after many a painful struggle, subdued the kingdoms*



SECT. of those princes which had oppressed God's <sup>doms,</sup> wrought right-  
 XVIII. Israel; others of them wrought *righteousness*,<sup>a</sup> <sup>teousness,</sup> obtained  
 and carried their obedience to God, and their <sup>promises,</sup> stopped the  
 Heb. mouths of lions,  
 XI. 33 zeal for his law to the most extraordinary degrees;  
 others of them *obtained promises* of the most un-  
 expected events in their favour, which were ex-  
 actly and circumstantially performed; others  
*stopped the mouths of lions*, which came roaring  
 against them, as if they would have devoured  
 them in a moment, or into whose dens they were  
 thrown.

34 Nay as to some of them we are expressly told,  
 that they *quenched the violence of the fire*, when  
 they were actually thrown into the furnace;  
 others of them *escaped the edge of the sword*,<sup>b</sup>  
 when it was just lifted up to destroy them; *they*  
*were strengthened in the midst of weakness*,<sup>c</sup> and  
 many of them *became so valiant in battle*, that  
 they *repelled the armies of the aliens*, or foreign  
 enemies when they encamped against them.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens.

35 There are also recorded in the prophetic writings  
 other instances, in which *women received their*  
*dead [children] by a resurrection* from the dead;  
 which till these examples, had never been known  
 or heard of. (Compare 1 Kings xvii. 22, 23;  
 2 Kings iv. 36, 37.) And the credible records  
 of succeeding ages inform us of the triumphs of  
 faith in a still more glorious degree: in which  
 several *others*, and particularly seven children,  
 and one pious and holy mother, *were tortured*<sup>d</sup>  
 in the most inhuman manner, to compel them  
 to renounce their religion, and commit idolatry;  
 but endured all with invincible fortitude,  
*not accepting deliverance*<sup>e</sup> when it was offered

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured not accepting deli-

<sup>a</sup> *Wrought righteousness*.] Some have interpreted this, not only of their leading lives exemplary for holiness, but *administering justice* to others. But I do not know that the phrase has ever that signification.

<sup>b</sup> *Edge of the sword*.] Probably this may refer to the deliverance of David from the sword of Saul, and of Elijah, and Micajah, from that of Ahab.

<sup>c</sup> *Strengthened in weakness*.] Some refer this to their being recovered from sickness, by faith and prayer, as Hezekiah, Job, and David were.

<sup>d</sup> *Were tortured*.] The original word

signifies a peculiar sort of torture, which was called that of the tympanum, or drum, when they were extended in the most violent manner, and then beaten with clubs, which must give exquisite pain, when all the parts were on such a stretch. See Wolfius. Curre Philolog. in loc.

<sup>e</sup> *Not accepting deliverance*.] Probably the apostle here refers to 2 Mac. viii. 11, 14, 23, 29, where there is an evident reference to a *resurrection*, which plainly shews it then to have been assuredly believed among the Jews. Dr. Scott thinks it was revealed to them by Daniel and Ezekiel, in order to prepare them for

verance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

them, nor even riches and preferments added to the proposal, that they might obtain a better resurrection<sup>1</sup> than their persecutors could offer them; when they seemed more than half-dead; even a resurrection to the enjoyment of an everlasting kingdom in the heavens. *And others,* 36

16 And others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; moreover, of imprisonment.

in the same glorious cause, received the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings;<sup>2</sup> but neither the derision, nor the pain could prevail upon them to desert their profession. *Yea,* they proved also the utmost force of bonds and imprisonment, in which many of them languished for tedious months and years, under all the ill-usage which commonly attends such confinements.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempt-

And others were brought out from their bonds<sup>37</sup> to the most infamous and painful executions; and they were some of them stoned, and others sawn asunder,<sup>h</sup> they were tempted<sup>i</sup> by unheard-of cruelties on the one hand, as well as the offers of immediate deliverance on the other, and

those severe trials which they were afterwards to undergo for the sake of their religion. Scott's Christian Life, Vol. V. p. 208. But it may be justly debated, how far the passages referred to could afford certain proof of a resurrection. It is observable, that Josephus, being probably ashamed to avow a hope which the heathens had so much derided, suppressed this circumstance, and only hints at some expectation of a future state.

[*Better resurrection.*] Dr Owen understands this, as if the apostle had meant, *The better resurrection*, that is, the resurrection which is better than the resurrection of the wicked. But it is observed by Jacobus Capellus, that most probably, in that case, the article would have been prefixed, *an spiritualis resurrectionis*. The opinion of Crellius and Dr Hammond, is, that the word *better*, is to be understood as opposed to a present remission of their torments; and this sense I have adopted in the paraphrase; supposing it bears a respect to the deliverance which they would not accept, mentioned in the words immediately preceding. Mr. Hallet is exceeding clear, that the opposition lies between the resurrection to eternal life, which these martyrs expected, and the resurrection of the dead children to life in this world, mentioned in the first clause of the verse.

<sup>2</sup> *Scourgings.*] Jeremiah was buffeted,

Jer. xx. 2; and some think, scourged too, chap. xxxvii. 15. But scourging was so frequent a punishment, both alone, and before a capital execution, (compare Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, Vol. I. Book I. chap. viii. sect. 13. and Dr. Scott on Matthew xxvii. 26.) that it is probable it was inflicted on many other pious persons on account of their religion.

<sup>h</sup> *Sawn asunder.*] Dr. Prideaux, (Connect. Vol. I. p. 29.) and many others, suppose the apostle might here refer to the tradition among the Jews, that the prophet Isaiah was *sawn asunder* at the command of Manasseh. Calmet understands by this expression, *being in a piece*, as it were under a threshing instrument, consisting of wooden rollers, full of sharp iron teeth like a harrow. Compare Isa. xli. 15; xxviii. 27; 2 Sam. xii. 31. Calmet's Diss. Vol. II. No. 5. p. 134, 135.

<sup>i</sup> *Tempted.*] Some suppose a mistake in the reading, and that it should be *tempted*, they were *sewed* with a red hot iron, or *burnt* alive, which undoubtedly would give a still stronger sense. The learned Albert (Observ. Philolog. p. 436.) supposes, that instead of *περὶ τῶν δεσμῶν*, the apostle wrote *καὶ περὶ τῶν δεσμῶν*, which expressed their being *agured* to death by ropes or cords twisted, and drawn tight about the body; or at least their being strangled.

SECT. at length slain with the sword; they wandered about clothed in the meanest manner, and sometimes, when their former habits were worn out, only in sheep-skins<sup>k</sup> and in goat-skins being destitute of the common accommodations of life, afflicted and even tormented, sometimes by the fury of their enemies, and at other times by the

38 rigour of the seasons. And though these were persons of the most amiable and venerable characters, of whom the world was not worthy that they should inhabit it; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and holes of the earth, that they might hide themselves, if possible, from the rage of their persecutors, who often, like dogs hunting for their prey, followed them even into these last retreats, solitary and inhospitable as they were.

39 And all these heroes in different ages, were supported under their respective trials, severe and extreme as they were, by the exercise of a firm and lively faith, in the fidelity of God, and the invisible rewards and glories of a future state; and it was by this, that having obtained a good report, they persevered to the end. But they did not receive the full accomplishment of the promise made to their fathers, nor have they yet arrived to the full and complete enjoyment of that

40 glory which faith taught them to expect: God having according to the counsels of his infinite wisdom, provided something still better for us, in the gospel-revelation; that so the beauty of his conduct and administration might be so much the more apparent; and that they without us, might not be made perfect;<sup>l</sup> but all might end with the greatest dignity and propriety, in bring-

ed, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38 Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

<sup>k</sup> Sheep-skins: *μῆλωται*:] The Seventy, in the case of Elijah, translate the word which we render mantle, by *μῆλῳ*, a sheep-skin. That sheep-skins and goat-skins, or at least the skins of some animals, were frequently worn by the ancient prophets, seems to be intimated, Zech. xiii. 4.

<sup>l</sup> That they without us, might not be made perfect.] It is debated, whether this refers to the most perfect state of the church on earth, and so expresses a decorum in the conduct of Providence, in gradually improving the church of God; or to the glory of the future state. I have given in the

paraphrase what seemed to me the most noble and important sense.—The learned Wolfius, (Curæ Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 774.) mentions with approbation the expositions of Alexander More, to this effect, that the promise which these worthies did not receive, related to the first personal appearance of the Messiah: that the better thing which God hath provided for us, is the promise of Christ's second appearance, that they might then be made perfect, but not without us, though we have received the accomplishment of the first promises without them.

ing all his children together, to the full consummation of their hopes in Christ Jesus his Son, at the time of his final and triumphant appearance.

SECT.

XVII.

Heb.

XI. 40.

Chap.

XII. 1.

XII. 1. Where-  
re seeing we also  
are compassed about  
with so great a cloud  
of witnesses, let us  
lay aside every  
weight and the sin  
which doth so easily  
beset us, and let us  
run with patience  
the race that is set  
before us.

In the mean time, we may consider this glorious and triumphant assembly, as looking down from the peaceful and blessed state at which many of them are already arrived, and observing the manner in which we endeavour to follow them. And let the thought animate us in a becoming manner. *Being therefore, as we are, encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses,*<sup>a</sup> who surrounds us on every side in a vast innumerable assembly, the spectators of our trial, *let us lay aside every incumbering weight, and especially the sin which in present circumstances has the greatest advantage [against us,]<sup>o</sup>* I mean, a disposition to relinquish, or dissemble the gospel, for fear of sufferings; [and] *let us run with patience and perseverance, the race which is set before us,* resolutely persisting in it, how long and painful soever it may be. Looking off from every object which would interrupt us in our career, and *firing our eyes upon Jesus, the leader and finisher of our faith,*<sup>p</sup> who called us

2 Looking unto  
Jesus, the author and  
finisher of our faith;

<sup>a</sup> *Being therefore encompassed, &c. let us.*] Our translators have rendered this, *Wherefore seeing we also;* connecting *we* with *have*, whereas it should be joined with *runner*, and considered as a kind of expletive.

<sup>n</sup> *[Cloud of witnesses.]* Capellus thinks this expression is an allusion to vast numbers of birds flying together like a cloud, Isa. lx. 8. The word *witnesses* certainly alludes to the Olympic race, where persons were appointed to stand at the mark, to observe who first came thither, and give evidence in favour of the conqueror; upon whom therefore a crown was bestowed according to their testimony. The allusion in *laying aside every incumbrance*, is too evident to need farther illustration. See the next note.

<sup>o</sup> *In present circumstances has the greatest advantage: ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπιβολῆς.*] This (as some imagine) may signify *a sin which sits easily about us*; which is explained of the vanity of the world, that seems to be matter of comparatively little danger, yet may be a fatal entanglement to us; as light garments may to those who run a

race, when they are blown about by the wind. Others would render it, *The well-circumstanced sin*, in opposition to what is *unprofitable*, without any recommending circumstance, or bare of ornament. Thus it is illustrated by Dunlop, Vol. I. Sermon. xiii. p. 309—316.

<sup>p</sup> *The Author and Finisher of our Faith.* It must be considered the word [our] is not in the original; but the faith of which Christ is the *Author and Finisher* must be the faith of Christians; and when he is said to be the *Author and Finisher of our faith*, it must signify not only that he was an illustrious example of it, but that, as our *Leader*, he brings us to it, and carries us on in the exercise of it, till we attain the complete felicity to which it was intended to introduce us. The word *looking off* our regard from other things, that we may fix them upon Christ.—Mr. Dunlop thinks Christ is called the *Author and Finisher of faith*, in allusion to the judges of the games, who set laws before the contenders, whereby they were to govern themselves, and then adjudged the crowns

SECT. out to this strenuous, yet glorious, enterprise; <sup>who for the joy that</sup>  
 XVIII. who animates us by his example, and supports <sup>was set before him,</sup>  
 us by his grace, till the season comes, in which <sup>endured the cross,</sup>  
 he shall bestow upon us the promised crown. <sup>despising the shame,</sup>  
 He indeed is the most illustrious example of <sup>and is set down at</sup>  
 all, <sup>the right-hand of the</sup> *who for the joy and glory that was set before*  
*him,*<sup>9</sup> in the view of honouring his heavenly  
 Father, and procuring the salvation of men, and  
 so passing to such exalted honour and felicity,  
*endured all the agonies of the cross, despising the*  
*shame of so ignominious an execution. And ac-*  
*cordingly, now the infamy, the pain, and the hu-*  
*miliation are ceased for ever, he is ascended to*  
*that world, where alone such consummate good-*  
*ness could receive its proper reward. And there*  
*he is set down in conspicuous and peerless ma-*  
*jesty, at the right-hand of the glorious and ex-*  
*alted throne of God, there to live and reign in*  
*immortal felicity and dignity. Among whom all*  
*the illustrious examples of faith, by whom you*  
*may be animated and edified, there is none*  
*comparable to him.*

## IMPROVEMENT.

Is it possible we should read these animated periods without feeling our hearts glow with a sacred ambition of acting as becomes those who have heard such tidings and beheld such examples? If the triumphs of faith in Rahab, and Gideon, and Verse  
 31, 32 Barak, and Sampson, and Jephtha, cannot move us, nor even those of David and of Samuel; if we are insensible of the martial prowess which they exerted in firm dependence on the Lord God of hosts; let us behold other combats, in which they who seemed weaker, became yet more gloriously victorious. Let us  
 33 remember, not only the mouths of lions stopped, but the violence of fire quenched, when the faithful servants of God were thrown

to the conquerors. Thus, says that excellent writer, he eases us of our burdens, animates our faintness, retards the progress of our enemies, and at length will with his own hands set upon our heads that beautiful diadem which he hath purchased with his own blood.

<sup>9 For the joy that was set before him.]</sup>  
 Some would render it, *Instead of the joy that lay before him,* meaning the honour and happiness he might have enjoyed in the present world. But *propositum* has so evident a reference to verse 1. that I

cannot by any means acquiesce in that interpretation. Besides, the word *anli* may well signify, *set against that joy,* and then the meaning will be that he despised the shame of the cross in comparison of the joy set before him. Nor can we imagine any love more disinterested than that, which should make his recovering sinners to God and happiness, the great joy of his heart, and, in subserviency to the Divine glory, the grand motive of his actions and sufferings.

into it. Yea, let us behold those who endured its unquenched violence, and turned all those painful and terrible sensations, into an heroic occasion of expressing the superior ardour of their love to God, and the steadfastness of their faith in him. Let us remember those youths, and children, and women, among the best of these worthies, indeed among the worthiest of them, who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a resurrection.

SECT.  
XVIII.Ver. 34.  
35

vain were all the terrors of persecuting rage and cruelty opposed to these triumphs. They submitted to imprisonment, and banishment, how dear soever their liberty and their native country might be; they quitted their commodious habitations for rocks, and caves, and their comfortable apparel for sheepskins and goat-skins. And when deserts and dens could no longer shelter their wretchedness, but they were seized by their blood-thirsty enemies, they beheld, and endured, undismayed, the most horrid instruments of death. When the piercing sword entered their vitals, when overwhelming stones dashed them in pieces, when the torturing saw was tearing out their very entrails, there was a principle within superior to all these, which nothing could pierce, which nothing could rend away, which nothing could overwhelm. God hath done an honour to our nature in raising up such illustrious persons, of whom the world was not worthy, and whose distinguished worth could never have been manifested in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, had it not been called out to such rigorous trials. Well might they rejoice on any terms in their dismission from a state of existence, so far beneath the elevation of their views. And though their names may be perished from among men, and the distinct history of each lost in the crowds of countless multitudes, yet are they all in remembrance before God; and the death of each of his saints, in such circumstances, peculiarly precious in his sight. They are now bathing in those rivers of delight, which flow through the celestial paradise, and waiting the full consummation of their hope in that better resurrection, in the views of which they suffered so bravely. In the mean time, they look down as it were from the battlements of heaven, upon our combats, upon our race. O, let them not see us basely shrinking back, or loitering! Let us lay aside every weight; let us, especially, guard against the sin which most easily besets us. And to establish all our fortitude, and to awaken all our ardour, let us look to an object brighter and nobler than all these, even to the Son of God, the Sun of righteousness, shining in high pre-eminence above all this cloud, and as it were gilding it by the reflection of his effulgent rays. Let us look to Jesus, who leads us on; to Jesus, who will complete the triumph of our faith, and set the crown on the head of every one who overcometh! Let us daily think,

Chap.  
xii. 1.

# 104 They should further consider the example of Christ :

SECT. XVIII. what agony, what ignominy, he endured for us; and let every consideration of noble ambition, of duty, and of gratitude, fire our souls, and add wings to our zeal: so shall we at length share in his joy, and sit down victorious with him on his throne, as he hath also overcome, and is set down with the Father on his throne.

## SECT. XIX.

The apostle animates the believing Hebrews to bear and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness. Heb. XII. 3—14.

### HEBREWS XII. 3.

SECT. XIX. IN order to encourage you, my dear brethren, in your Christian course, I have directed you, and I must again direct you, to the Lord Jesus Christ; for what can be more important than to consider him\*, who with patient fortitude, endured such obstinate and perverse contradiction of ungrateful sinners against himself. Think how great and illustrious a person he was, and what severe things he suffered, that you may not grow weary in your Christian course, nor faint in your minds, when called to share in some degree of his trials. And indeed you will be inexcusable if you should desert his cause, on account of any such trials as you have yet endured; for you have not yet undergone the severest proofs of your integrity, nor resisted unto blood, striving against sin<sup>b</sup>, as he did, who made his life a sacrifice to duty. And ye seem to have forgotten the exhortation<sup>c</sup>, of the word of God, which speaketh to you, as to his sons, (Prov. iii. 11, 12,) saying, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, as if it were a small matter; nor faint and

HEBREWS XII. 3. FOR consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the

\* Consider him; ἀνελόγησας αὐτόν.] The original word is very emphatical; and as Erasmus Schmidius observes, is a metaphor taken from arithmetical and geometrical proportions. So that it signifies the great accuracy and exactness with which they should consider the Author and Finisher of their faith, and especially the analogy between his case and their own.

<sup>b</sup> Resisted unto blood.] It has been justly observed by several commentators, that there are many agonistical terms in this context. In the phrase before us there

seems to be an allusion to the pugiles, or boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often besmeared with blood. Mr. Saurin justly observes, in his beautiful illustration of this text, (Serm. ix. p. 90.) that sometimes men were killed by the blows of the cestus. See also Dr. Whithy in loc.

<sup>c</sup> Ye have forgotten the exhortation.] Beza, and some others, choose to read this clause with an interrogation, Have ye forgotten the exhortation?

Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with his own children; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence:

4 *Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* [There seems to be a beautiful gradation in these words. To receive, signifies here to have a particular regard for. Compare Isa. xlii. 1 in the Seventy. The passage is quoted from Prov. xii. 11, 12; and the last clause of the apostle's citation, which is, *And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, is by our English version, and the old Latin, there rendered, *Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*. And this is agreeable to the modern pointing. But without any change in the Hebrew letters, the clause may be translated as it is by the apostle, agreeably to the rendering of the Seventy, and some other ancient versions. See Mr. Hallett in loc.

\* *Bastards.*] In those dissolute ages there were among the heathen many base-born children. And it is highly probable, that as for such, their education, (like that of Jephthah, whose fatal error might perhaps be owing to it,) was much

sink, when thou art rebuked by him; but avoid the extremes of proud insensibility, and entire defection. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth, with seeming severity, every son whom he receiveth<sup>a</sup> to peculiar favour.

It is evident therefore, that if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as wise and affectionate parents deal with their beloved sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not more or less? There are scarce any children, who do not sometimes need correction, and no wise and good parent, who will always forbear it. But if ye are without chastisement, of which all the genuine children are partakers, then are ye treated as men often treat bastards,\* about whose education they are often careless as being ashamed of them, and looking upon them as a scandal to their families; and not as they treat their legitimate sons, whom they intend to make their heirs, and concerning whom they are solicitous that they may be happy themselves, and a credit and comfort to the family they stand related to; which a child left to himself, without correction, is by no means like to prove.

Now if<sup>c</sup> when we had fathers of our flesh,<sup>9</sup> who corrected us, we gave [them] reverence,<sup>2</sup>

neglected, so as to come almost into a proverb.

[<sup>a</sup> *Now if.*] Instead of *id est*, the Syriac version seems to have read it *ut de*, but *if*. This reading is followed by Curcellæus; Beza expresses some approbation of it.—The learned Albert, and Raphelius, consider the clause as a smart and animated interrogation, and produce various passages to shew that this is the force of the Greek particle *id est*.

<sup>2</sup> [*When we had fathers of our flesh—we gave them reverence.*] It had indeed been more literally rendered, *We had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence*; which some consider as a Hebraism, as if he had said, *Who corrected us that we might give them reverence*. But it seems more natural to understand the particle *ut*, connecting the two clauses. *We had fathers of our flesh, and we gave them reverence*. In which view the version I have given fully expresses the apostle's design.

SECT.

XIX.

Heb.

XII. 6



SECT. and submitted patiently and quietly to their discipline, shall we not much rather, on the justest principles of filial duty, be in subjection to the great Father of our spirits, by whom that noble part of our nature was produced, in the production of which our earthly parents had no share? And indeed we know this to be necessary, if we desire to *live*<sup>h</sup> since rebellion against him will be infinitely fatal, and expose us to a dreadful and capital punishment.

HEB.  
XII. 9.

- 10 But not to insist on considerations of terror; let us attend to those of a more ingenuous nature, and particularly those which arise from the reason of things, and a view of what will on the whole be most conducive to our own truest advantage. As for our earthly parents, they indeed, for a few days,<sup>i</sup> while we were in a state of infancy and childhood, corrected [us] as they thought good, and there might sometimes be a mixture of weakness and arbitrary passion in their chastisements; but we are sure this can never be the case with respect to our heavenly Father. O, far from that: if he take the rod into his hand, it is for our advantage, and that we may be partakers of his holiness; which is indeed the greatest dignity, beauty, and glory of the rational nature, and what most immediately tends to the happiness of time and eternity. Now it is true, that all chastening for the present seemeth not to be [matter] of joy, but of grief: it is painful to the flesh, and human nature would rather desire to be excused from it: but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness,<sup>k</sup> to those that are in a suitable man-

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are

<sup>h</sup> And live.] This awful, yet tender insinuation of the terrible consequences of rebellion against the Father of spirits, (in which there is an allusion to the capital punishment to be inflicted on a disobedient child, Deut. xxi. 18. &c.) is very remarkable; and an instance of the apostle's forcible manner of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique manner, and in very few words. Compare Rom. xii. ult. 1 Tim. iv. 16. Tit. ii. 15. Phil. i. 29. Heb. xii. 28. And many passages to be found in all his writings.

<sup>i</sup> For a few days.] This is to be applied both to our earthly parents, and

our heavenly Father, and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation, that this whole life, when compared with our future being, is but as a few days: indeed infinitely less than the days of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth.

<sup>k</sup> Peaceful fruit of righteousness.] Possibly alluding to the crowns of olive given to the victor in the Olympic games, which was also an emblem of peace. The learned Bos would translate the word, *agreeable, pleasant, joyful*, it being usual to express pleasure and happiness by peace: Wolfius is opinion, that the expression refers to that peace with God which we ob-

exercised thereby. **never exercised therewith.**<sup>1</sup> It produces and improves those virtues which afford peace and joy to the mind; and like a nobler crown than that which many endure so much to obtain, richly rewards the most strenuous labour, and most afflictive struggle. SECT. XIX. Heb. XII. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore lift up the hands, which hang down, and the feeble knees;

<sup>16</sup> And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

<sup>14</sup> Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Therefore rally your languid spirits, *lift up the hands that hang down*,<sup>m</sup> that they may exert themselves in this glorious combat, *and strengthen the feeble tottering knees*, that they may hold out to the end of this important race. And by the proper exercise of discipline in your Christian societies, and by all the other offices of true and faithful friendship, *make straight paths for your feet*. Regulate matters so, that the way of duty may be as obvious and easy as possible, *that the infirm, the lame, and the decrepit, may not, by discouragements and temptations, be turned out of the way, or thrown down, but that every such feeble traveller in the way to Sion, may rather be healed; recovered from falls or weakness, and strengthened to a course of more strenuous and persevering piety.*

And while the jarring interests of this world so often occasion scandalous contentions between men, and even between Christians, let it be your faithful and zealous care to *pursue peace with all men*, even when it may seem to flee from you. And at the same time remember, whatever the consequence may be, to cultivate universal holiness, in all its branches; *without which*, how ready soever men may be to flatter themselves with vain expectations, *no man shall see the Lord*. For it is his unalterable decree, for ever to exclude those souls in which sin

tain by faith. See CURR. Philolog. Vol. IV. p. 783.

<sup>1</sup> *Exercised thereby.*] Not only corrected, but instructed and edified; setting themselves to search out the proper lessons which adhesive dispensations are intended to teach.

<sup>m</sup> *Lift up the hands that hang down.*] The connection of these words in Isaiah xxxv. 3, from whence they are borrowed, leads us to understand them of assistance given to others. But this must by necessary consequence suppose a care to exert ourselves with vigour and resolution. It

is certain that these are likewise agonistic phrases, by the following expression, *make straight paths for your feet*, which some understand, ordering their lives so that others might be directed and encouraged by their example. Diodate gives it a singular sense, as if it had been said, By your voluntary and cheerful obedience, make the rules of the gospel seem easy. I have in the paraphrase endeavoured to unite both the views to ourselves and others, as it is certain one could not be intended as exclusive of the other.

SECT. reigns, from that sight of him in the celestial  
 XIX. world, for which their tempers and dispositions  
 render them altogether unfit, even to a degree  
 Heb. of utter incapacity.  
 XII. 14.

## IMPROVEMENT.

IN what clearer words can those exhortations of the apostle be expressed! by what more powerful motives can they be enforced!  
 Verse Behold, the whole of our duty comprehended in one word: *to follow after peace and holiness!* Behold the most awful engagements suggested, that *no man*, whatever his profession, or hope, or confidence may be, can *possibly see the Lord without it!* What a solicitude should it awaken to cultivate holiness in ourselves, to promote it in others, and to remove every obstruction as much as possible. “Awaken our spirits, O Lord, by thy good Spirit, that  
 3 “the most languid hands, and feeble knees, may be strengthened  
 “and confirmed.” And that they may be strengthened, let us  
 4 look to our great Leader, to him who passed through so many years, in the midst of the most violent opposition, the most perverse contradiction. Surely we might see enough to animate us to maintain the combat, even till we left the last drop of our blood in the place, when we strive against sin, against his enemies and ours, to deliver us from the power of which, he assumed flesh and blood, and died.

He, the best beloved Son, was distinguished by his Father's chastisement, though there was not the least degree of failing in him to deserve it. But *the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* And shall we who have merited to be chastised with scorpions, mourn at the rod? Let this scripture be attentively reviewed, and laid up in our mind, to dispose us to the most exemplary patience under affliction; and to guard against the opposite and  
 5 dangerous extremes, of despising Divine corrections, or fainting  
 8 under them. Would we wish to be excused from the tokens of God's paternal love? Would we wish to be neglected, as if we were bastards, rather than cultivated with the discipline of beloved children? Were we submissive to our earthly parents, and shall we rebel against our Father in heaven? Shall *we not*  
 9 *be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live?* May our souls remember the unanswerable argument and the awful motive to this subjection. In what would opposition end, but in death? and how unreasonable would that opposition be? Is God in these later ages of the world become an arbitrary and tyrannical being, that his proceedings should now be suspected and censured? Is he no longer concerned for the profit and advantage of his children? or is it no longer desirable to be partakers of his holiness? of that holiness, which is to fit us to see and enjoy him for ever?

Lord, should each of us say, I bless thee, that thou hast made me partaker of thy providential bounties, of thy gospel, of thy grace, in any degree : but Oh, my soul longs to be partaker of thine holiness, to bear thine image more completely, as the great glory and blessedness of my nature. For this therefore would I submit to thy corrections, though for the present ever so grievous, and wait those peaceful fruits of righteousness which will be so rich an equivalent for all.

SECT.

XIX.

Verse 11

## SECT. XX.

*The apostle solemnly cautions them against despising the blessings of the gospel, and sacrificing them to any secular views, or animal gratifications; and enforces the caution by representing the incomparable excellence of those blessings; and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced; which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious as that was, did by no means equal. Heb. XII. 15—29.*

### HEBREWS XII. 15.

LOOKING diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness spring up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

I HAVE been earnestly exhorting you to cultivate holiness in your own hearts and lives; and I must farther press it upon you, that you endeavour to maintain a friendly and brotherly inspection over each other. *Look to it*, therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, *lest any one*, by apostasy from the Christian religion, *fall short of the grace of God*, under the day of grace and dispensation of the gospel; *lest any root of bitterness* and poison, *springing up* unheeded, occasion trouble to the society in general, and by it, before you are aware, many be disturbed and defiled, through the contagion of so bad an example: *Lest there [be]* for instance, any fornicator, who should abuse the liberty of the gospel into an occasion of gratifying his fleshly lusts; or any other voluptuous and profane person,

SECT.

XX.

Heb.

XII. 15.

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as

\* *Root of bitterness and poison.* The word *root*, which is used, Deut. xxix. 18, properly signifies an *infectious kind of plant*, which by its influence taints other vegetables which grow near it.

<sup>b</sup> *Profane person.* Esau is called a *profane person*, because as a *prophetic blessing* went along with the *birth-right*, there

was a *profane* contempt of it in the infamous bargain here referred to. And as an immoderate eagerness in the gratification of appetite, would naturally imply a contempt of spiritual and Divine blessings, to be sacrificed to such gratifications, it was properly expressed by *profaneness*.

sect. who should put an open contempt upon spiritual blessings, sacrificing them to the hope of some present indulgence; as *Esau, who for so mean a thing as one meal, gave away his birth-right*,<sup>c</sup> even all the peculiar and religious honours, as well as revenues of his primogeniture.

Heb.  
XII. 16.

17 For ye know, that when afterwards he would gladly have inherited the blessing, which was its most valuable attendant, he was rejected;<sup>d</sup> for when he would have persuaded Isaac his father to have revoked and transferred that which he had just before pronounced upon his brother Jacob, he found no room for repentance,<sup>e</sup> no possibility of changing his father's mind, by all his submissions and intreaties; though he sought it earnestly, and even with tears, yet still Isaac persisted in what he had done, and said, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." Gen. xxvii. 33.

18 The inestimable privileges and prerogatives, which the gospel brings along with it, so superior to the Mosaic law, add great weight to these exhortations and cautions; for ye, who are proselyted to Christianity, are not come to Sinai again, to the awful mountain which was the object of touch,<sup>f</sup> though the touch of it were prohibited on so high a penalty; and to the burning fire that surrounded it, and the thick cloud and darkness, and dreadful tempest, which were the tre-

Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17 For ye know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

<sup>c</sup> For one meal gave away his birth-right:] That seems the just rendering of *avti βρωσιμου; μιας αμειδου κα παρολοκα αυτου*. Dr. Barrow, I think would render it, for one little eating bout: but that seemed not sufficiently grave.

<sup>d</sup> He was rejected.] From comparing the blessing of Jacob and Esau, Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 39, 40, it will appear that there must be something spiritual in the blessing of Jacob; else Esau would not have been said to be rejected, considering what he obtained. See Dr. Goodwin's Works, Vol. I. p. 43.

<sup>e</sup> No room for repentance] We render it no place for repentance. The meaning of this undoubtedly is not, that he would have repented, and could not; but that there was no room for his repentance, it would not be regarded, or, in other words, that his father's mind could not be changed.

<sup>f</sup> Mountain, which was the object of touch: *ορις ἡλιασφωμενον*.] Dr. Wall, in his note upon this place, declares himself inclined, if he had the authority of any manuscript or version to support him, to read *ἡ ἡλιασφωμενον*, which might not be touched, referring to the prohibition in Exod. xiv. 13. and which the apostle mentions in the very next verse. But there is no necessity at all for this alteration. For it is not intimated by the expression, that the mountain might lawfully be touched, but that, as I have translated it, it was the object of touch, which indeed is implied in the very prohibition itself. And in thus characterising mount Sinai, it was his intention to intimate that it was an earthly mountain, not like mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more;

mendous signals of God's descent upon it; *And to the sound of the trumpet*, which at length waxed exceeding loud, (Exod. xix. 18, 19;) and the voice of distinct words, spoken with a sound which reached all the thousands of Israel, and with which they who heard, were so powerfully affected, that they intreated the word might not be continued, or carried on any farther to them, but that the remainder of what the Lord had to say to them, might be delivered by the mediation of Moses: *For they were not able to endure*

sect.  
xx.  
Heb.  
xii. 18.

20 For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

that charge which was pronounced; so that there seemed little room for the caution given, and that with so much severity, that it was added, *If so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or struck through with a dart*, if it escape immediate death from the tempest and the lightning. (Exod. xix. 12, 13.)

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear, and quake.)

*And the appearance was so dreadful [that] Moses himself, who was happy in such unparalleled degrees of the Divine favour, and accustomed to converse with God in so intimate a manner, when urged by the people to act as their mediator in this awful transaction, said, Though I consent to undertake the charge, I do nevertheless exceedingly fear and tremble.*

22 But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,

*But ye, my dear brethren, are so happy as to be come to a dispensation, the reverse of all these terrors, even to the mild and gentle discoveries which God makes of his presence on Mount Sion; and to the holy and joyous solemnities which grace the city of the living God situated there, even the heavenly Jerusalem, his sacred and everlasting*

[Moses said, &c.] This circumstance is not recorded in the Mosaic history. Some imagine, that the apostle received it by Divine revelation; and others resolve it into a tradition, the truth of which his inspiration enabled him to distinguish. Mr. Calvin supposes Moses spoke these words in the name of the people.

[Mount Sion.] There seems to be throughout this whole period a reference to the manifestation God made of himself upon Mount Sion, as being milder than that upon mount Sinai. And the heavenly society with which Christians are incorporated, is considered as resembling the former (that is, Mount Sion,) in those

circumstances, in which it was more amiable than the latter. Sion was the city of God. In the temple, which stood there, cherubim were the ornaments of the walls, both in the holy and most holy place, to signify the presence of angels. There was a general assembly and congregation of the priests, which were substituted instead of the first born, of whose names catalogues were kept. There was God, as the supreme Judge of controversies, giving forth his oracles. The high-priest was the mediator between God and Israel, (compare Luke i. 8—10,) and the blood of sprinkling was daily used.

sect. abode; and to myriads of surrounding angels; and to an innumera-  
 xx. whom it is impossible to number. Ye are ble company of an-  
 gels.

Heb. XII. 23. come to the great general assembly,<sup>i</sup> and church of the first-born,<sup>k</sup> the priests of God, who are written in heaven, whose names are registered among the inhabitants of the place, the denizens of that city, and ministers of God's temple there. Above all, it is to be remembered, that ye are come to God, the supreme Judge of all, from whose sentence there can be no appeal; and to the spirits of the righteous, whose guilt being entirely expiated, they are made perfect<sup>l</sup> and complete both in holiness and happiness, so far as may consist with the separate state, in which they are joyfully waiting the appearance of their

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

24 Lord. To this society you are related, and ye shall shortly arrive at that world where it holds its supreme residence; since you have happily drawn near to Jesus, the Mediator of the new and better covenant, far exceeding that established with Israel of old by the mediation of Moses: and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than [the blood of] Abel; <sup>m</sup> crying for pardon, whereas his cried aloud for vengeance.

24 And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25 And since this is the nature of the dispensation under which ye are now brought, let me solemnly charge it upon you, to see to it, that

25 See that ye re-

<sup>i</sup> The general assembly; *συνήγησις*.] The learned Albert shows, (Observ. Philolog. p. 441,) that this word properly signifies a stated convention upon some joyful and festival occasion; particularly that it is applied to the concourse at the Olympic games. In which view it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror, when they were convened before Mount Sinai.

<sup>k</sup> First-born.] Saints are called the first-born, because, under the law, the first-born were peculiarly appropriated to God, and heirs of a double honour, and inheritance.

<sup>l</sup> Just men made perfect.] Justified before God, sanctified in their natures, and holy in their lives. Dr Watts thinks the apostle here uses the expression *just*, or *righteous*, to intimate that he included the patriarchs, or Jewish saints; and that

there was a peculiar propriety in doing it as he is writing to the Hebrews. Watts's Death and Heaven, p. 72.—Mr. Baxter urges this as a proof of the distinct existence of the soul in a separate state.

<sup>m</sup> [Blood of] Abel.] By this some understand the blood of sacrifices in general, call it the blood of Abel, because he is the first of whose animal sacrifices we read: But there is a harshness in that expression not easily paralleled; I should therefore rather understand it of the blood of Abel himself, as referring to the gentle and gracious character of Christ, and the blessings, instead of vengeance, drawn down by his blood. There is certainly some transposition of what one would have thought the most natural order here; but it must be ascribed to the rapturous manner in which St. Paul conceived of these things, and his fulness of matter when he touched upon them.

fuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.

*we reject not him that speaketh to you, with these circumstances of endearment as well as solemnity: for if they escaped not capital punishment, who rejected him that, by Divine inspiration, gave forth oracles on earth<sup>a</sup>, how much more [shall] we [not be able to escape] if we turn away from him [that speaketh to us] from his throne in the heavens?* If all indignities done to Moses, a mortal man, when speaking by Divine authority, were so severely avenged; how much more those offered to the Lord Jesus, who condescended to come down from heaven, and lay aside the glories in which he there dwelt, to undertake the office of our Law-giver, and our Mediator.

ster.  
XX.  
Heb.  
XII. 25

26 Who then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And indeed the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom God has now spoken to us, is the Person that presided in that great solemnity of giving the law, to which we have been referring. It was he, whose voice then shook the earth, and whose spirit inspired the prophets; but now he hath promised, saying by one of them, (Hag. ii. 6.) Behold, yet once more I make so thorough a reformation, that I may be said to shake not the earth only, but also the heaven<sup>b</sup>. For it is in such language that he hath chosen to represent the change of the Mosaic economy for that of the gospel. And it is evident, that this [ex-27] yet once more, or for the last time, not

27 And this word, Yet once more, signi-

<sup>a</sup> Him that gave forth oracles on earth.] This is generally expounded of Moses. Mr. Pierce refers it to God; since it is said, his voice there shook the earth, which he saith, must be the voice of God. And the argument of the apostle, according to him, is taken from the different manner of speaking; his speaking on earth being accompanied with earthly signs, &c. whereas his speaking from heaven means speaking by Christ, coming down from heaven, and declaring heavenly things, (John iii. 12, 31, 32; 1 Pet. i. 12,) more glorious than the law. (2 Cor. iii. 6—11.) But it may be objected, that God spake them from heaven, when he gave the law at mount Sinai, and that the voice, whose voice, may refer to the latter clause, Him that speaketh from heaven. Yet even on this supposition, he that speaketh from heaven, must, I think, be

God, since it is said, that his voice shook the earth, verse 26.

<sup>b</sup> Shake not the earth only, but also the heaven.] This shaking must refer to the alterations made in the constitution of religion, and be considered not as introductory to, but consequent upon, the coming of the Messiah. Many think this refers to the new heavens and earth, or the state of glory to be at length introduced. Grotius explains it of the extraordinary phenomena in the heavens, and on the earth, at the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, and mission of the Spirit, as in part an accomplishment of this prophesy. But there would be great room to debate, how far these were more extraordinary, than the commotions on giving the Mosaic law. I therefore chose to adhere to the other, as the most probable interpretation.



114 *By whom we receive a kingdom which can never be moved.*

SEC. T. only signifies the removal and change of the things, <sup>with the removing of</sup> there said to be *shaken*, that is, of the ordi- <sup>those things that are</sup>  
 XX. nances of Moses, as of things which were made <sup>shaken, as of things</sup>  
 Heb. and constituted only for a time<sup>9</sup>; but also strong- <sup>that are made, that</sup>  
 XII. 27. ly intimates, that he would introduce thereby a <sup>those things which</sup>  
 dispensation to be changed no more, <sup>cannot be shaken</sup> that the <sup>may remain.</sup>

28 Son. *As therefore we have received such an unshaken kingdom, which shall never be removed to make way for any different establishment, and which gives us the assurance of a reign in eternal glory, let us see to it, that we have grace whereby we may serve God, from whom we receive it, in an acceptable manner.*

As that grace is so freely offered to us, let us not be so wanting to ourselves as to fall short of it. And while we feel our hearts inspired with all that gratitude and confidence, which suits the genius of so merciful a dispensation, let them be tempered with a becoming mixture of reverence and pious fear; that we may not, by an unworthy abuse of the gospel, deprive ourselves of its invaluable blessings, and sin beyond all

29 possibility of farther remedy. *For though our God manifests himself in the beams of such mild majesty, he [is] still possessed of that tremen-*

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God

<sup>9</sup> *Of the things shaken: σαλευσάμενος.* The original word is very elegant and expressive: it being, as the learned Bos observes, Exercitat. Philolog. p. 259, a metaphor taken from ships at anchor, which though they are secured from being driven away, yet are in a fluctuating condition, and tossed up and down, within a certain compass, by the force of the wind and waves.

<sup>9</sup> *As of things made and constituted only for a time.* Bos imagines that there is in the original a mistake of the transcribers, and for *μετὰ σαλευσάμενος*, as of things which were made, he would read *μετὰ σαλευσάμενος*, as of things shattered and worn out, namely, by being tossed and shaken, and therefore wanting to be changed and repaired. And thus he supposes there is a continuation of the metaphor, which is mentioned in the note above. But conjectural emendations, supported by the

authority of not a single manuscript, are not to be admitted without evident necessity. Mr. Pierce justly remarks, that *μετὰ* is frequently used for appointing or constituting, as in chap. iii. 2; Mark iii. 14, and many other places; and that *μετὰ σαλευσάμενος* being a participle of the preterperfect tense, ought not to have been translated, *Things which are made*, as in our English version, but *Things which were, or had been made, or constituted and appointed for a time; and I have rendered and explained it accordingly.*

<sup>1</sup> As grace is so freely offered, it is strongly intimated in the word, off the exhortation; else there could be no pro- for it. And this oblique intimation, which it is, as it were, taken for, that we may certainly have grace, if we take proper methods for obtaining it, appears to me peculiarly affecting.

a consuming fire, dous power, which was so awfully displayed at mount Sinai, and will break forth as a consuming fire against all those that presumptuously violate his laws, and despise his gospel, (Deut. iv. 23, 24.)

HEB. XII. 29.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE glories of the eternal Jehovah are indeed inconceivable, and immutable. Still he is possessed of all that awful majesty which he displayed on mount Sinai, and able in a moment, as a Verse devouring fire, to consume the transgressors of his law. But 29 though he kindly reminds us of this dreadful scene, he does not limit and confine our views to it; he appears to us, not on that mountain, which was involved in blackness, and darkness, 18 in tempest, and fire: but calls us to the milder glories of mount Zion. Yet even there might our consciousness of guilt cause us 22 to fear. How should we appear in the city of the living God, or presume to mingle ourselves with the general assembly and church of the first-born? How should we hope for a place among 23 myriads of angels, and the perfected spirits of the just, in the presence of God, the Judge of all, if it were not for the refuge and 24 support which we find in Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and in the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel? But being thus encouraged, let us draw 26 near with humble boldness, though with reverence and godly fear; while we hear the voice that once shook the earth, speaking to 28 us in accents of love, and promising a kingdom that cannot be moved. That kingdom do we in some degree receive now, and we hope for the full possession hereafter. It shall indeed be obtained, if we learn so to value it, as in the expectation of it, to serve God acceptably, in the improvement of that grace, which awaits us, to make us equal to his service: only let us see to it, that we do not, by our own criminal negligence, fail of that grace: that we do not profanely and foolishly follow the example of that wretched Esau, who stands recorded with so much 15 infamy, as having for one sorry meal sold his birth-right, with all his sacred privileges. How many sons of Abraham, having 16 followed him, have found, as he did, the impossibility of retrieving so fatal a bargain; found, as he did, that there was no place for repentance, though they may have sought it carefully 17 with tears; with an anguish of heart, which none can conceive, but they who know what final and everlasting despair means! May God preserve all his churches from such roots of bitterness, as, alas! have too often sprung up among them! And since there 15 is so much danger, that many may be defiled by them, let those that have a real concern for their honour and safety, be looking round, with a proper solicitude, to guard against the first ap-

pearance of what may be so fatal to their honour, their purity, and their peace.

## S E C T. XXI.

*The apostle exhorts Christians to brotherly love, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man; from a consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ, which ought always to encourage us boldly to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet in his cause. Heb. XIII. 1—16.*

## HEBREWS XIII. 1.

HEBREWS XIII. 1.

§ECT. XXI. I SHALL conclude my present address to you, <sup>HEBREWS XIII. 1.</sup> LET brotherly love continue. of the most comprehensive and important I can give you, is this: *Let brotherly love always continue,*<sup>a</sup> among you. And remember not only the common obligations of benevolence, by which all human creatures are connected with each other, but those peculiar engagements which the Christian profession lays you under to study the good of those, who by faith in the gospel are all the children of one Father, and heirs of <sup>2</sup> one glorious inheritance. This should certainly engage you to relieve and accommodate such as are in necessity, and especially your Christian brethren, in their travels from place to place, often undertaken for the service of their great Master. *Be not, therefore, forgetful of hospitality; for some have, by the practice of it, entertained angels,* as common strangers, *without knowing it,*<sup>b</sup> and have found the hospitalities of

<sup>2</sup> Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

<sup>a</sup> *Let brotherly love continue.*] Diodate thinks this exhortation was peculiarly suitable to converted Jews, as the prejudices against their Gentile brethren were in many of them so strong, that they were ready to disown them with abhorrence.

<sup>b</sup> *Entertained angels unawares.*] It is possible that from the story of Abraham and Lot, who had the honour of entertaining angels, under the form of ordinary travellers, some tradition might reach the Indian Brahmins, who tell their people, that the gods sometimes descend in the form of poor indigent

persons, and that when any of the children of men relieve them, they repay the charity with vast advantage. (See Millar's Propagation of Christianity, vol. II. p. 217. I can lay no stress upon Mr. Pierce's reasoning against our supposing that Christ was one of those angels, then the apostle would have urged the argument in a stronger view, by observing that they had entertained Christ himself. (See his notes on chap. i. ver. 1. and Mr. Hallett on this verse.) For the apostles were under no obligation, on all occasions, to use the strongest argument that could possibly be thought of; and as

many former years abundantly rewarded by one such favourable visit. And thus you know not but they who come to you under a very mean appearance, may be as messengers from God to you, and the instruments of bestowing some extraordinary favours from him. You see many 3 of your brethren suffering for conscience sake, and some thrown into prison; *remember them* therefore especially, *who are in such bonds, as if you were yourselves bound with them, [and] them that suffer any kind of ill-treatment in such a case, as being yourselves also in the same body with them, and so obliged to a tender sympathy; not now to insist on your sharing the same common infirmities of human nature with them all, which should engage you to carry your compassion to strangers, and even to enemies.*

xxx.  
xxi.  
Hob.  
XII. 2.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

I know that some, who pretend to more than 4 ordinary chastity, say many reproachful things of a conjugal life; but I assure you they are much to blame; *for marriage [is] to be held honourable in all, and the proper use of the marriage-bed is to be esteemed as undefiled; since none can imagine, that God would make an action in itself morally evil, absolutely necessary for the support of the human race in future generations. But as for whoremongers and adulterers, who either despise or pollute it, God will undoubtedly judge them, however they may escape human punishment.*

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness: and be content with such things as ye have;

[*Let your*] conversation [be] free from every 5 degree of covetousness, and [be] contented with such things as ye have, without eagerly or impatiently desiring what Divine Providence may

there might perhaps be some room to debate this matter, it was great prudence to build an argument upon a principle, in which all that believe the authority of scripture, must agree.

[*Marriage is honourable.*] Some critics, and especially the popish writers, to avoid the argument which naturally arises from hence against forbidding marriage to the clergy would render it, *Let marriage be honourable in all, and let the bed be undefiled.* But the connection of the latter clause, introduced by the particle *but*, is sufficient to vindicate our version, unless it should be disposed, with the Vulgate,

to prefer the authority of the Alexandrian and Clermont copies, which instead of *et*, read *nam*, *For whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

<sup>4</sup> *Content with such things as ye have.*] Phocylides makes use of the very words of the apostle in a precept of this kind, *Ἀφροδίσια μακάριον.* But what the age of that writer was, I fear it is impossible to ascertain. There are other passages however in his excellent moral poems, which makes it probable he was acquainted with the New Testament as well as the Old, from whence he has taken so many pious and humane precepts.

SECRET. see fit to withhold. And though being so slenderly provided for, as most of you are, it may seem very probable you should soon come to want, even the necessities of life, especially after

XXI.  
Heb.

XIII. 5. the late ravages you have suffered from your enemies, who have plundered your goods (chap. x. 34); be not anxiously solicitous about that; for he who hath all the stores of nature at his command, and who owns the relation of a Father to us, *hath graciously said*, (Josh. i. 5.)

*I will not, I will not leave thee, I will never, never, never forsake thee.* And though these

emphatical words were at first spoken to Joshua, yet it was not under a personal character only, but considering him in his relation to the Israel of God, and as acting for its support; so that all God's people, as his love to them is in all ages the same, may take a just encouragement from it, and we in particular *may take courage to say*,<sup>6</sup> *The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*: thus comforting ourselves, not only in the seeming uncertainty of future supplies, but in the midst of the greatest dangers, and when threatened by our enemies with the severest sufferings.

7 And let me now urge you to *remember those dear and venerable persons who having formerly presided over you*,<sup>7</sup> in holy things, *have spoken to you the word of God, whose course is now finished*. Though all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not however forget their instructions and their examples; but be mindful of that *faith* which they taught, and which they exercised. And let it be your great care to *imitate them, considering the end of*

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, consi-

\* We may take courage to say, &c.] This application of a particular promise to such general purposes, opens a noble hint for the improvement of the Old Testament, upon this great and solid principle, that God, who is no respecter of persons, intends, that expressions of his favour to this or that eminently good man, should be used for the encouragement of all others of the like character. The emphasis of the original is so well known, that I shall not insist upon it.

<sup>7</sup> Presided over you.] Bishop Lloyd, (Funeral Sermon for Bishop Wilkins, p.

7, 8,) thinks this may refer to James the Apostle, and to James, commonly called the first Bishop of Jerusalem; both of which had been put to death therefore before this epistle was written.—Our English version here is very far from being justifiable, Remember them which have the rule over you; whereas they were not dead. It should have been, Who have presided over you; or as I have considered the two clauses in connection, They having presided over you, have spoken to you the word of God.

during the end of their conversation.

*their conversation.* Reflect on the happy manner in which they quitted life, on that support which they found, in their latest moments, from the truths they had taught you, and on that heroic resolution with which some of them were animated to meet even martyrdom itself in that sacred cause: and let the remembrance of these things engage you stedfastly to retain their faith, and courageously to follow their steps. And<sup>8</sup> remember for your farther encouragement, that though the most faithful ministers of the gospel die, yet as that sacred dispensation still continues immutable, so *Jesus Christ*, the great Guardian of those who faithfully adhere to it, in the tenor of his declarations, as well as in the glories of his Divine nature, [*is*] *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; and therefore can well support you, by whomsoever you may be forsaken. And let this be a powerful engagement to adhere to his gospel, and to preserve it uncorrupted. In this view, see to it, that ye<sup>9</sup>

SECT.  
XXI.  
Heb.  
XIII. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

<sup>9</sup> Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for *it* is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

*be not carried about by various and foreign doctrines*, disagreeing with each other, and with the great standard of truth in the Divine revelation. Many are zealous *for* such, and particularly Judaizing teachers; but remember, [*it is*] *a good thing that the heart be established in an adherence to the grace of the gospel, and not zealous in those distinctions between various kinds of meats, and reposing its confidence in those ritual observances which some are ready to lay so much stress upon; but by which they who have been most conversant [in them] and regarded them with the greatest exactness, have not profited*, so as to make any real attainment in religion, by all that scrupulosity and mortification. They boast indeed of many of their<sup>10</sup> privileges, in which they think themselves superior to us; but it is infinitely more than a balance to all, that *we have an altar* of a spiritual nature, even that dignified by the sacrifice of

<sup>10</sup> We have an al-

<sup>9</sup> *Christ the same.*] I think this makes a much nobler sense, if explained of the immutability of *Christ's power and grace*, than if merely understood of his doctrine; though I have given a hint of the latter

sense, out of regard to some great expositors, who have urged Acts v. 42; 2 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Cor. i. 24; as instances in which Christ signifies not his person, but his word.

**SECT.** the Son of God, of which they have no authority to eat, who attend divine service in the tabernacle. For it is well known, that the bodies of

**XSI.**

**Hob.**

**XIII.** those animals, whose blood [being offered] for sin, is carried<sup>h</sup> by the high priest into the holy place, are according to the appointment of the law, as instituted in the wilderness, to be burnt without the camp, and afterwards without the city of Jerusalem; no part of them being eaten

by the priests. Now methinks there is something in this circumstance which may suggest to us matter of pious and comfortable meditation, when we compare it with what we know of the great High Priest of our profession. We may, therefore, methinks say, that *Jesus also, that under his grand sacerdotal character he might sanctify the people*, not by animal victims, but by his own blood, which he offered up as a sin-offering for us, to atone our guilt, and consecrate us to God, suffered not within the walls of the temple, or the city, but upon mount Calvary, which you well know lies without the gate

of Jerusalem. And this consideration, as it suggests our leaving the Jewish sacrifices, so it should undoubtedly engage us willingly to suffer all extremities in his cause. *Let us therefore break through every attachment, and go out, as it were, unto him without the camp, bearing our part in his reproach.* If our fidelity to him require, as it very possibly may, that we should submit to excommunication, infamy, and persecution, let us acquiesce, and find an equivalent in this thought, that we are hereby rendered

more conformable to Christ. And let us submit to this so much the more cheerfully, considering how trivial the interests of this mortal life are, when compared with those which relate to eternity; for it is most certain, that *we have here no abiding city*; in which view, I spoke of our sojourning here, as an encampment in moveable tabernacles or tents. But, blessed be God, we are animated with the cheerful hope and expectation of better blessings, and seek one

tar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate

13 Let us go forth, therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach

14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

<sup>h</sup> [whose blood—is carried, &c.] An argument has been drawn from these words, as from some other passages that occur, to prove that the temple was standing when this epistle was written.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

to come; a splendid and secure abode where it will be our everlasting business to admire and adore its great Founder and Sovereign, and to worship in his celestial temple. In the meantime, Jesus is there under the character of our great High Priest, who ever lives to perform that important office for us to which he is every way equal; *by him therefore let us always offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of [our] lips, giving thanks to his glorious name.*

SECT.  
XXI.  
Heb.  
XIII. 15

But while we present this verbal tribute, let us remember that another yet more substantial is required. *Be not therefore forgetful of doing all the good you possibly can, in your respective stations, and of communicating liberally and cheerfully of your substance, to those that are in necessity; for God is well pleased with such sacrifices;* which were always more pleasing to him than any victim, which, in the neglect of these, could be brought to his altar.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THOSE other expensive sacrifices which the Mosaic law required, are now entirely abrogated. Let us consider this as an additional engagement upon us, to abound more and more in those of unfeigned benevolence and real charity; rejoicing, that the God of our lives, who gives us all, will condescend to have any regard to them. And let our brethren in Christ be remembered with that distinguishing affection which suits the relation in which we stand to them; and in whatever bonds or affliction they may be bound, let us endeavour to make their fetters sit lighter upon them, by every thing which our compassionate assistance can do for that purpose; considering ourselves as in the body.

That we may be ready to all such kind offices, let us endeavour to overcome *the love of money, which is the root of all evil.* Let us learn, (and Oh that Divine grace may effectually teach us!) to moderate our desires, to be contented with what Providence allows us, whether more or less, and to trust in God, as to the supply of our future wants. Well may we not only trust, but even boast in him, when we consider in how endearing a manner he has declared, with such reiterated assurances, that *he will*

[*Sacrifice of praise.*] To suppose that this refers to the *eucharist*, and the following verse to charitable collections

made at the celebration of that ordinance, seems very fanciful.



SECT. never, never, never leave us; that he will not, yea, he will not  
 XXXI. forsake us. Surely, the language of the most cheerful and cou-  
 rageous faith well corresponds to that of so gracious and soul-re-  
 Verse 5 viving a promise. Let faith then put a reality into it, or rather  
 6 glory in that certain reality which there cannot but be in every  
 8 promise; especially as *Jesus Christ*, in whom this, and all the  
 promises are confirmed to us, is *the same yesterday, to-day, and*  
*for ever.*

7 And let this thought support us under those breaches which  
 may be made on the church by death. Christ ever lives to guard  
 and protect it, and to maintain those great truths which in every  
 8 age have been the joy and confidence of his people. Let our  
 attachment to him, therefore, be preserved inviolable, and the  
 purity of our souls unspotted. And let us never fear to share in  
 his reproach, in whose glory we have such a security of sharing;  
 12 but cheerfully go, as it were, out of the camp to him, who suf-  
 fered crucifixion for us without the gates of the city. Were we  
 called to endure martyrdom for his sake, he would only lead us  
 14 out of a mean and precarious tabernacle: for *we have here no*  
*continuing city*; but then he will conduct us, if we are faithful  
 to him, to a *city* so durable, that its *foundations* are represented  
 by rocks of solid *gems*, so glorious, that its *pavements* are de-  
 scribed as *gold*, and its *gates* as *pearl*. May our faith be daily  
 beholding it as near; and may we feel every day more of its at-  
 tractive influence, to render us superior to all that earth can  
 promise, and to all it can threaten, while we are passing thither.  
 Under his guardianship, let us daily be *offering the sacrifice of*  
 15 *praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, as well  
 knowing, that while we are on our journey to the New Jerusa-  
 lem, no mountain can be so steep and rugged, no valley so deep  
 and gloomy, as not to admit of the songs of Sion.

## S E C T. XXII.

*The apostle concludes with recommending to them some particu-  
 lar regards to their pious ministers, and intreats their prayers;  
 adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction* Heb.  
 XIII. 17, to the end.

### HEBREWS XIII. 17.

I HAVE been urging you to an affectionate re-  
 membrance of those who were once your  
 teachers, but are now dismissed from their la-  
 bours, and received to their reward. And I  
 must on the same principles, press upon you a  
 due regard to those faithful ministers who still  
 survive. Obey them, therefore, who preside over

### HEBREWS XIII. 17.

OBEY them that

have the rule over you, and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief for that is unprofitable for you.

you,<sup>a</sup> in those rules and directions which they are authorised by Christ to give you, and submit yourselves [to them] with a becoming respect; even though their office should sometimes oblige them to make such addresses to you as may for the present be disagreeable. For they are solemnly appointed to watch for your souls,<sup>b</sup> for their everlasting safety and happiness. And well knowing that the trust is of infinite importance, they would execute it as those that must render an awful and strict account of their office, and of the fidelity with which they have discharged it. Behave towards them, therefore, while they are pursuing the several duties of it, in such a manner, that they may do it with joy, and not with inward groaning;<sup>c</sup> under discouragements arising from your unkind treatment; or from such other irregularities of your conduct as may require them to interpose by any methods of severity; for that [is] most unprofitable and dangerous for you, and will on the whole be much more for your own detriment than it can possibly be for theirs.

SECT. XXII.  
Heb.  
XIII. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in

Among the rest of your Christian ministers, I will persuade ourselves that you will not forget us. And we intreat, that while absence may render many other instances of affection impracticable, you would not fail however to pray for us. And indeed we may very cheerfully ask, and very reasonably expect this; for though our enemies may meanly insinuate the contrary, we are confident, that we have a good conscience, and

<sup>a</sup> Preside over you.] Lord Barrington imagines, that he refers to the apostles of the circumcision, to shew that he would not in any respect derogate from their authority; (Essay I. p. 87;) but I cannot think the word *ἐπιμενέω*, should be thus limited. I rather apprehend, with Mr. Boyst, (Serm. Vol. I. p. 415,) that it refers to those who immediately presided over them in their religious affairs, that is, the ministers of the several particular churches. The application of it to diocesan bishops is merely arbitrary.

<sup>b</sup> Watch for your souls.] Chrysostom says, he never read these words without trembling, though he often preached several times in a day.

<sup>c</sup> That they may do it with joy, and not with groaning.] This must necessarily refer to the present discharge of their office; for it is not possible for any perverseness of the people to prevent a faithful minister's giving up his account with joy. Nor can any groans be mingled with those triumphant songs which God will put into the mouths of all his people. But their Master will remember what they suffered by their people's means; and the account may sit heavy on them, when the sorrows of their faithful pastors are all over. Not to say, that great present damage to the people would proceed from those things which are grievous to their faithful and affectionate spiritual guides. See Dr. Owen in loc.

SECT. have conducted ourselves, so as to have a testi- all things willing to  
 XXII. mony to our integrity in yours, that we are de- live honestly.  
 ~~~~~  
 Heb. determined, whatever it may cost us, in all things  
 XIII. 18. to behave honourably, to converse in the most  
 fair and reputable manner, according to the  
 obligations of our sacred profession and office,  
 though we should sacrifice every thing to that

19 resolution. *And I especially beseech you to do this*, that is, to pray earnestly and affectionately for me, both in your private retirements, and in your public assemblies, *that I may quickly be restored to you* from this confinement, and may have an opportunity of rendering you those services which were prevented by this unjust imprisonment, occasioned by the fury of the populace when I was last at Jerusalem.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 And now, to draw towards a close, *may that great and blessed Being, who condescends in his gospel to reveal himself to us under the endearing character of the God of peace, who, reconciling us unto himself by his Son, becomes the author of eternal blessings, cause his choicest favours to descend upon you. May he, who to confirm these gracious purposes, hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, who is constituted that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant,*<sup>a</sup> and by his blood sealed the everlasting and unchangeable covenant, which appoints him to stand in

20 Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 that amiable relation to his people; May he, I say, *make you perfect in every good work, that you may, cheerfully and constantly do his will, exerting an holy readiness and alacrity in the discharge of every duty; himself producing in you that temper and disposition of soul which is most pleasing and acceptable in his sight, through the powerful influences of his Spirit, given you by Jesus Christ, who hath procured this invaluable favour for his people; to whom [be] glory in all the churches, for ever and ever: Amen.*

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

<sup>a</sup> By the blood of the everlasting covenant.] There is an ambiguity in the connection of these words. Some think they refer to God's bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, according to that engagement or covenant which was sealed by his blood. Beza and others connect the

clause with the words immediately preceding, namely, *that great Shepherd of the sheep*, which our Lord was constituted by the blood of the everlasting covenant. And this sense seems to be far preferable. Compare Acts xx. 28; and John x. 11.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in a few words.

I have discovered my mind to you in the course of this epistle with great freedom; but as it all proceeds from the most sincere affection, I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written to you above in a few words; but if I were to open all that is in my heart, the letter would swell far beyond the bounds I have here assigned it. In concluding it, I give you the pleasure to know that [our] dear brother Timothy, whose zeal for me had for a while made him a partner in my confinement, is now set at liberty, with whom, if he come soon, I hope by the Divine permission, I shall be able to see you, which I cannot but greatly desire.

sect.  
XXII.  
Heb.  
XIII. 23.

23 Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

In the mean time, salute in the most respectful and affectionate manner, in my name, all that preside over you, as the officers of your respective churches, and all the other saints, who are private members of them. They who are natives of Italy, joined in the bonds of the same Christian profession, and now with me at Rome, send cordially salute you. May the blessing of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I am so often commending you and all my Christian brethren, [be] with you all. I put my hearty amen to it; and you assuredly know, that I can wish you nothing better; I hope, therefore, that you will with all your hearts put your own amen to it.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET those, whom God, in the course of his providence, hath called to preside over the souls of others, remember to watch over them with a becoming diligence, considering that an impartial account will shortly be required; considering, that if they do not properly conduct themselves in this important office, Verse their blood, who perish by their neglect, must be required at 17 their hands. And let the people committed to their care be concerned, that the faithful servants of Christ may discharge their office with joy, and not with grief; that they may not from time to time be sent with groanings, and with tears, to the presence of their great Master, to lament the obstinacy, perverseness, and rebellion of those over whom God hath made them watchmen and shepherds. The grief would now sensibly affect the minister; yet, on the whole, as he would be to God a sweet

SECT. *savour in Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that*  
 XXII. *believe*, the greatest detriment would fall on those who have  
 made such ungrateful returns to the Divine goodness, and to  
 their fidelity.

That all other duties may be more regularly and properly discharged, let private Christians be engaged to pray earnestly for their ministers; for those especially, who make it apparent, that  
 Verse they desire to maintain always a good conscience; and that what-  
 18 ever sacrifices they may be called to make to it, they are determined in all things to live reputably and honourably, so that the ministry may not be blained, but the Christian profession in general adorned. And God grant, that none but persons of such a character may be introduced into the ministry, or supported and countenanced in it!

Let pastors and people, be often looking to him, who is *the*  
 20 *great Shepherd of the sheep*, and whose relation to the flock is established on *the blood of the everlasting covenant*. Ever may the thoughts of that blood engage us to regard him with all due veneration and love; ever may we be looking to him, who through this blessed Saviour, appears as the God of peace, for every blessing we respectively need.

We all need his gracious influence, to implant the first principles of the Divine life; and we need them, to make us perfect to do his will, and to work in us those things which may render  
 21 us more completely pleasing in his sight. And therefore let an humble dependence on his grace be daily maintained and expressed; considering of how great importance it is to be acceptable in the sight of God, and to approve ourselves at all times to him.

22 That it may be so, may *grace be with us all*, and continue with us, from the first entrance on the Christian life, through the whole course of it, till *it present us blameless in the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. Amen.*

THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR:**

OR,

**A PARAPHRASE**

**THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE**

OF THE

**APOSTLE JAMES.**

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



A  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES  
ON THE  
CATHOLIC EPISTLE  
OF  
ST. JAMES.

**T**HE epistle of St. James, and the six following epistles, have been commonly distinguished by the appellation of *catholic* or *general*, because most of them are inscribed not to particular churches, or persons, but to the body, either of Jewish or Gentile converts over the whole world, or at least dispersed in several countries.

The first of these, I mean that of St. James, was from the earliest times received by the Christian church, though not so universally as most of the epistles of St. Paul. But a precise detail and examination of the several arguments relating to this question, would bear too large a proportion in the space allotted to these Introductions. It may however be right to observe, in support of the authenticity and authority of this epistle, that considerable stress hath deservedly been laid upon its antiquity, which appears both from internal and external evidence; and also, upon the correspondence of the sentiments it contains, with the tenor of the Christian doctrine; and though this hath been called in question



by some, through an attachment to particular hypotheses\* yet it is evident, I apprehend beyond all controversy, to those who read the epistle with suitable candour and attention. And it appears to me, that the authority of this, and some other parts of the New Testament, having been early questioned by some primitive churches, afford an argument of their particular caution, that no other writings should be admitted into the sacred canon, however excellent, besides those which had an undoubted claim to that distinction; and justly challenges our deference to their judgment, who doubtless were most capable of deciding, and gave sufficient evidence of their care as well as their capacity. The epistle before us having passed through a severe and accurate scrutiny, appears to have been at length universally received, and accordingly hath been transmitted down to the present age, as an authentic part of those *oracles of God, which are able to make us wise to salvation.*

If any particular argument were to be suggested to second the force of these observations it might be this, that this epistle is found in the Syriac version, and was received by the churches in Syria. This version is undoubtedly ancient, and is apprehended by most learned men to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. And besides the authority conciliated to the epistle of St. James by the antiquity of the version, it should be observed, that the version was made for the particular service of the converted Jews, to whom the epistle itself was originally written; and it should therefore seem, that its authenticity and authority were from the beginning acknowledged by those for whom it was intended: and I think it can hardly be doubted, that they were better judges of the question than the Gentiles, to whom it was not written.

\* It is well known, that at the beginning of the Reformation, Luther apprehending the doctrine delivered by St. James concerning *justification*, to be inconsistent with that of St. Paul, opposed the authority of this epistle, in the preface to his German translation of the New Testament, published in the year 1522; though he is not followed in this point by those who at this day are distinguished by his name; and indeed he himself, as we are informed by Wolfius, (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 6.) and by Fabricius, (*Biblioth. Græc. Lib. iv. cap. v. § ix.*) afterwards changed his opinion.

among whom therefore it was not likely to be propagated so early, and who at first might be prejudiced against it, because it was inscribed to the Jews.

If any are disposed to examine the several testimonies of the Christian Fathers, as to the authority of this epistle, they may find them collected with great fidelity and accuracy, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the second part of his valuable work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*.

As to the author of this epistle, some have imagined it to be James the elder, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. But in this they are evidently mistaken. James the elder was beheaded by Herod, in the year of our Lord 44; whereas this epistle was not written till a very considerable time afterwards. So early as the year 44, the gospel does not seem to be propagated far beyond the bounds of Palestine; and it cannot be supposed there was any very large number of the Jews of the dispersion, who were then converted to the Christian faith: and though the epistle seems to have been intended in some measure for the general benefit of the twelve tribes, yet more especially for those among whom there were converts to the Christian religion. Besides, it is intimated in the epistle itself, that the Jewish Christians were at this time sunk into very remarkable degeneracy, both in doctrine and practice, which is not likely to have been the case while they were under the first impressions of their conversion. And indeed in this epistle there are some plain intimations that the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand, chap. v. 1—8, which event was accomplished about the year 70; and from this circumstance we may reasonably conclude the date of this epistle to be about the year 60 or 61.

It therefore appears that this epistle was not written by James the elder, but must have been the composition of another James, called James the less, who was the son of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, and is said to be the brother, that is, according to the latitude in which the Jews were accustomed to understand this expression, the kinsman of our Lord. See *Mat. xiii. 55; Mark vi.*

3. And who is expressly numbered among the twelve apostles. See Mat. x. 2, 3; Mark iii. 17, 18; Luke iv. 14, 15; Acts i. 13. And though the time of this James being put to death is not absolutely certain, it is supposed by many learned men to have happened in the year 62, before St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, which was in the year 63. And if this account be right, the date of his epistle cannot be later than I have already assigned it.

James the less stately resided at Jerusalem; whence he hath been styled by some ancient fathers, bishop of that city, though without sufficient foundation, as we observed (Vol. III. sect. 154, note<sup>b</sup>.) Now James being one of the apostles of the circumcision, while he confined his personal labours to the inhabitants of Judea, it was very natural for him to endeavour by his writings to extend his services to the Jewish Christians who were dispersed abroad in more distant regions. For this purpose there are two points which the apostle seems to have principally aimed at, though he hath not pursued them in an orderly and logical method, but in the free epistolary manner, handling them jointly or distinctly, as occasions naturally offered. And these were—"To correct those errors both in doctrine and  
 " practice, into which the Jewish Christians had fallen,  
 " which might otherwise have produced fatal consequences; and then to establish the faith, and animate the hope of sincere believers, both under their  
 " present and their approaching sufferings."

And in prosecution of this double view, after inscribing the epistle to the twelve tribes in their dispersion, the apostle enters on his subject, by endeavouring to fortify their minds under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace in answer to the fervent prayer of faith, and exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining the possessors; chap. i. 1—16. And then as a means of their steadfastness, notwithstanding the most powerful temptations to apos-

tasy, he exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue, especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted, ver. 17, to the end. And then the apostle, by an easy transition having glanced at some of their particular failings, takes the occasion of introducing cautions on sundry other articles in which they needed reprehension; particularly against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the Divine precepts, especially where the royal law of charity, or universal benevolence, was in question; chap. ii. 1—13. After this, as several of the Jewish Christians discovered a disposition to rest in an external and empty profession of religion, probably from an abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, he largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere historical faith, and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation, ver. 14, to the end. And as such a barren profession is apt to inspire men with conceited and vain-glorious sentiments of themselves, while they are destitute of every Divine habit and attainment, he deems it expedient to subjoin a caution to the Jewish Christians, against their being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and as spiritual pride tends to inflame men's unbridled passions, and to set on fire their licentious tongues, he resumes and expatiates on a subject which he had before only slightly touched upon, recommending a strict government of the tongue as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance; chap. iii. 1—12. And in close connection with such a topic, it was very natural to inculcate, as the apostle does, a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them;

to restrain which, he recommends a humble application to God for divine influences, ver. 14—chap. iv. 10. Suggesting particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin. And then as to afflicted and oppressed Christians, he encourages and exhorts them to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord, ver. 11.—chap. v. 8. And concludes the epistle, with condemning profane and vain swearing, with recommending moderation, fortitude, and prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation, ver. 9, to the end.

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

## CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF St. JAMES.

## S E C T. 1.

*The apostle James endeavours to fortify the Christians to whom he writes, under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, and of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace, in answer to the fervent prayer of faith; and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors.—James I. 1—16.*

JAMES I. 1.  
JAMES, a servant  
of God, and of  
the Lord Jesus

JAMES I. 1.

THIS epistle is written by *James*,<sup>a</sup> who esteems it his honour to be a faithful servant and constant worshipper of the true and living God, and of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ; and is addressed with the sincerest affection to the

SECT.

I.

James  
I. 1.

<sup>a</sup> James.] That is, as we have already observed, the apostle James the less; whom antiquity, (I know not on what pretence,) calls bishop of Jerusalem; perhaps because he resided there more than most of the

apostles. He was the brother of Christ: and it is said he was exalted to this office, on the death of James the great, beheaded by Herod. Acts xii.-2, 17.

SECT. *twelve tribes*<sup>b</sup> of Israel in this their state of dispersion;<sup>c</sup> so that he would have every son of Abraham according to the flesh consider it as addressed to him, and would himself be considered as *greeting* them all with the most cordial wishes of grace and peace; though especially as addressing himself to those whom the bond of the same Christian profession unites yet more strictly to the Author.

James  
I. 1.

2 My dear brethren, count it matter of all joy, when you fall into a variety of trials, for the sake of the true religion, which so many, instead of embracing with a becoming thankfulness and zeal, are by all possible methods endeavouring to extirpate. Far from being discouraged by such trials, in such a cause, rejoice in them, as knowing that the little and short proof of your faith to which it is now brought, in its natural consequences, under the influences of Divine grace, *worketh patience*, which will grow up by such exercise. And let patience have [its] perfect work, that it may rise to its highest improvements, during this little space of time, in which alone you will have an opportunity of glorifying God, and adorning Christianity, that so ye may be perfect and complete, deficient in nothing; but the other graces of Christianity will generally shine brightest where patience is most conspicuous.

5 But if any one of you be deficient in wisdom,<sup>d</sup> and incapable of certainly discerning his duty in such critical conjunctures as these in which you are called out to act; let him ask further supplies

2 My brethren, count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let

<sup>b</sup> *Twelve tribes.*] Dr. Lardner, (Credibility, Vol. I. p. 223, &c.) very justly observes, that Josephus concludes the *twelve tribes* to be still in being, when he says, that six persons were sent out of every tribe, to assist in translating the scriptures into Greek. It is very evident, that at the restoration in Zorobabel's time, *ten tribes* staid behind. See Dr. Whitby in loc.

<sup>c</sup> *In this their state of dispersion.*] Dr. Whitby in loc. hath some very pertinent quotations from Josephus, Philo, and even Cicero, to shew that the Jews were dispersed abroad, and were to be found in great multitudes in almost all

parts of the world. And Dr. Lardner, besides the citations in Dr. Whitby, produces another remarkable passage to the same purpose, from a letter of Agrippa to the Emperor. See Credib. of the Gospel-History, Part I. Book I. chap. 3. Compare Acts ii. 4—11.

<sup>d</sup> *If any of you be deficient in wisdom.*] Several interpret this of wisdom to bear afflictions well, and suppose, that when God is said *not to upbraid*, it is upon supposition of former impatience: but this, though authorised by so great a name as Mr. Howe, (see his Works, Vol. I. p. 690.) is one of those limited interpretations which I cannot fully approve.

him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother

of [it] from God, its eternal fountain, who gives to all every necessary communication of that, and all other blessings, liberally, and upbraideth not any with the importunity or frequency of their addresses; and it shall be given him, so far as is needful for his safety, and the discharge of his duty. But then let him take care, that he ask in steady faith, nothing wavering, not divided by the desires of obtaining, and the fears of not obtaining the grace he asks, or doubting of God's readiness to bestow it; for he that wavers, and has not a firm confidence in the Divine goodness and faithfulness, can have no other solid and substantial support: but is like a billow of the sea,\* driven on, and tossed by the wind, in a restless and unsettled condition, (Isa. lvii. 20,) easily discomposed and agitated by every adverse blast, and in the greatest danger of being dashed in pieces. Let not that man therefore think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, while he continues in such a situation, and dares not trust in him for those supplies of grace which he professes to seek. These unworthy suspicions, as they wrong the Divine goodness, may in many instances prevent the communication of those favours which might otherwise be obtained. Such a double-minded man, whose schemes are divided between God and the world, and who cannot cheerfully and resolutely commit himself, in confidence of Divine support, to be led whithersoever Providence shall please, [is] unsettled in all his ways; he will perpetually be running into inconsistencies of conduct, and those imperfect and undetermined impressions of religion which he feels, will serve rather to perplex and torment, than guide and secure him.

In nothing are the generality of men more apt to mistake, than in estimating the value of

\* Like a wave of the sea.] Mr. Saurin paraphrases it thus; "He ought not to resemble the waves of the sea, which seem to offer to the spectator, that is upon the shore, the treasure with which they are charged; but soon plunge it into the abyss from which it cannot be recovered." Saurin's Sermon. Vol. IX. p. 438.

But the interpretation given in the paraphrase, appears to me much more simple and natural. He elsewhere paraphrases it, "Like a wave which moves on, and seems to come to the shore, but immediately returns with impetuosity into the gulph from whence it came." Ibid. Vol. V. p. 56, 57.

SECT.

I.

James

I. 5.



SECT. external circumstances; but let the principles of of low degree rejoice  
1. Christianity instruct you, my brethren, to cor- in that he is exalted:

James  
I. 9.

rect that mistake; and in this respect, *let the brother of low degree*, of a poor and obscure condition, *rejoice in his exaltation*; let him think of his dignity as a Christian, and entirely acquiesce in his low sphere of life, for his circumstances do really give him such advantages for religion, by placing him under a shelter from many temptations, that he has a much fairer probability than others, of rising to some emi-

10 nence in the heavenly world. *But let the rich man be greatly cautious*, and if he allow himself to rejoice, let it not be *in the height of his* circumstances, but in the *humiliation*<sup>1</sup> of his mind; for all other occasions of rejoicing are very precarious. And as for his distinction in this world, *as the flower of the grass he shall*

11 *quickly pass away. For [no sooner] is the sun risen with a scorching heat, [but] immediately the grass, which in spring looks so fair and flourishing, is dried up; and the flower thereof, that adorned it, loses its painted glories yet much sooner; it falleth to the ground, and all the beauty of its lovely form is perished: so shall the rich man also fade away in his paths, and though he may by prudent management or remarkable success, grow richer and richer, he dies in the midst of all his wealth, and it can no longer either delight or adorn him.*

12 You will be exercised with trials while you continue in the present world; but repine not at them: *happy [is] the man who with a proper steadiness and fortitude of mind, endures temptation: for being approved by such a course of them as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint, he shall receive the crown of eternal life, which the Lord Jesus Christ has graciously pro-*

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath pro-

<sup>1</sup> *The rich man in his humiliation.*] Mr. Pyle explains this of a rich man's being stripped of his possessions by persecution, and so reduced for the sake of his adherence to Christianity; but this seems not properly opposed to the exaltation mentioned above. Indeed in any view it must be allowed a very difficult passage. But I have preferred the interpretation which seemed to be least entangled,—and indeed to be most agreeable to the

original, if we may rely on an observation made by Bēza, and alter him by Raphaelus, (and they are both very critical judges of the Greek language,) that *καταστροφή*, the word here used by St. James, expresses rather the disposition of a man's mind, than his state and condition, which is properly *καταστροφή*; though it must be confessed, this distinction is not always observed.

vised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

vised to all them that love him, and express their love by such fidelity and zeal. Let no man who is tempted, say I am tempted of God; for God is himself, by virtue of his boundless knowledge and almighty power, incapable of being tempted by evils; and such is the perfect rectitude and benevolence of his nature, that he tempteth not any man; but on the contrary, abhors all sin, and lays no man, in any imaginable circumstances, under any necessity of committing it: But every man is tempted by the innate weakness of his own nature, in concurrence with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, being allured by his own lusts, and for want of wisely and resolutely opposing the first rising of them, being ensnared to the actual commission of sin: For the gradation is much more swift and fatal than the generality of mankind are aware; and indeed lust having conceived, brings forth actual sin, by a speedy birth, where perhaps the full indulgence of it was not intended; and sin, when it is finished, or perpetrated, is impregnated with death, and tends, in its consequences, to the final ruin both of soul and body, as naturally as the conception of an animal does to the birth. Therefore be not deceived, my beloved brethren, by its flattering form, nor venture to trifle with temptations, under a fond conceit that you shall be able to break the connection, by stopping yourselves at pleasure in the advance of the danger, or recovering yourselves again when sin has been committed.

SECT.

I.

James

I. 15.

[*Tempted of God.*] The phrase, it seems, had formerly been in use; and there is a sense in which it is allowable. But the obnoxious sense is so much more obvious, that the apostle thought proper to advise it should be avoided for the future. Perhaps the word might have altered its signification, as it is certain many words do.

[*Being allured and ensnared:* ἐξελκομενος καὶ διπασόμενος.] The original words have a singular beauty and elegance, containing an allusion to the method of drawing fishes out of the water with a hook, concealed under the bait, which they greedily devour.

[*Finished, or perpetrated:* ἀποτελεισθαι.] The word is used in this sense by Polybius, in a passage quoted by Raphael in loc.

[*Therefore be not deceived.*] This is agreeable to the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript, which after μὴ inserts οὖν, therefore; by which the connection is rendered more apparent.

## IMPROVEMENT.

LECT. LET us learn this holy caution, and guard against those baits  
 1. of lust under which death is concealed; remembering that God  
 has made us with a power of determining our own actions, that  
 he tempts none to evil, nor appoints to any such temptations, as  
 4, 15 he knows to be in their own nature irresistible. Be our spiritual  
 13 enemies ever so powerful, or ever so artful, they cannot do us  
 any hurt, till we betray ourselves into their hands. Yet certain  
 it is, that their artifice and their power, in conjunction with the  
 5 advantage which the corruption of our own hearts gives them,  
 make it requisite, that conscious to ourselves of our deficiency  
 in wisdom, we should ask it of God. Let the liberality with  
 which he gives it, and the royal freedom with which he has pro-  
 mised it, encourage us to ask it with such constancy, that we  
 may receive daily supplies; and with firm confidence in his  
 6, 7 goodness, that we may not waver, and *be like a wave of the sea*  
*tossed by the wind.*

Trusting in that supply of grace we receive from him, let us  
 2 go forth calmly and cheerfully to meet such trials as the infinite  
 wisdom of God shall appoint for us; how various and pressing  
 3, 4 soever they may be; remembering they tend to improve our pa-  
 tience, and by patience to perfect every other grace; and that  
 12 if we be not overcome, we shall be approved, and made more  
 meet to *receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to*  
*them that love him.* And O, that the love of this blessed Lord,  
 who has procured as well as promised it, may always render us  
 superior to every trial, and *more than conquerors through him*  
*that hath loved us,* and thereby hath acquired to himself so just a  
 claim to our supreme affection. With hearts faithfully engaged  
 to him, and established in the firmest resolutions for his service,  
 3, 10 let us look with indifference upon those worldly circumstances,  
 about which they who have no sense of a higher interest are ex-  
 ceedingly solicitous; and let us regulate our value of all the good  
 things of life, by a regard to their aspect upon our religious cha-  
 racters and hopes.—If low circumstances may improve these, let  
 us look upon them as true exaltation; and if wealth, and digni-  
 ty, and applause, may endanger these, let us rather fear them,  
 than aspire to them. Whatever we have obtained of those  
 things which the men of the world are most ready to covet and  
 admire, is transitory and fading as the grass, or even as the  
 flower of the field; and sometimes like those beautiful but ten-  
 der productions of vegetable nature, is consumed by the excess  
 of those causes to which it owes its existence and its beauty.  
 “ Give us, O Lord, durable riches, and righteousness, and that  
 “ honour which cometh from thee, and is immortal, as its great  
 “ Original!”

\* S E C T. II.

*The apostle exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God, in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue; especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridding their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted. James I. 17, to the end.*

\* JAMES I. 17.

JAMES I. 17.

EVERY good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

THAT ye may be fortified against every temptation, and may be animated to behave in a manner becoming your Christian profession, remember, that every good gift, and every perfect gift which the children of men can receive, is from above; and the more completely excellent the benefit is, the more reason have they to acknowledge it, as descending from the great and eternal Father of lights,<sup>a</sup> the blessed God, from whom reason and light and joy are derived. The sun itself is but a feeble image of his glory, with whom there is no variableness, nor so much as any shadow of turning;<sup>b</sup> whereas the sun is

SECT. II.

James I. 17

<sup>a</sup> [Father of Lights.] It is the opinion of Glassius that this phrase only expresses the majesty and glory of God, as if the apostle had said, *The most illustrious and glorious Father*. But the accurate Bos most justly imagines, that the allusion to the sun which there is in the following words, begins here; and that the phrase refers to the heathens calling that glorious luminary, the *Father of Light*, and the *author of light*; some instances of which he produces. See EXERCITAT. Philolog. in loc. The learned Albert cites a passage from Macrobius, in which the same title is applied to Jupiter. Observe. Philolog. in loc.

<sup>b</sup> [Every good gift, &c.] It is observable that the apostle makes use of two different words to express gift; the one of which is more poetical and sounding than the other; and he has placed the words in such an order that they make an heroic verse. So that were they to be rendered, "Every good gift, and every boon complete," it might perhaps give the English reader a more exact idea of the

original; but as there is all imaginable reason to believe this was quite an accidental thing, I thought it might have the appearance of affectation to have endeavoured to retain it. As neither *boon* nor *present*, would have been proper in this connection, I know not how to render *δωρεῖς* and *ἐπαγγελίαι* by different words; such is the poverty of our language, or the defect of my acquaintance with it. But the words, *a completely excellent benefit*, are inserted in the paraphrase, to preserve some little imitation of the original. As some learned men have observed that *τοπος ἀστρονομίας* is something of an astronomical phrase, and refers to the different aspects of the sun, as it approaches one or the other tropic, (see Dr. Bates's Works, p. 747.) I have been careful to express that sentiment. It hath been the opinion of some persons that this is intended to oppose some heretical notion of the influence of the stars in the affairs of human life; but I know not that any such ridiculous conceit had so early a footing in the church.

SECT.

II.

James  
I. 17.

continually varying, and has no sooner arrived to its meridian, but it begins to descend to the west, or to its summer height, but it verges towards the winter again; causing the direction of the shadows it occasions, proportionably to

18 vary. But the immutable and everlasting God has condescended to multiply those favours upon us as Christians, which should bind our souls to him in the bonds of unchangeable love; for of his own sovereign will he impregnated us with the powerful word of his Divine and evangelical truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits<sup>c</sup> of his creatures, more excellent than others, and in a peculiar manner separated and consecrated to him from among the rest of mankind. Let us be conscious of the honour he has hereby done us, and take heed that we do not sacrilegiously alienate ourselves from

19 his service. Therefore, my beloved brethren, that we may be thus religiously sacred to him, and ever employed to the purposes he has directed, let every man be swift to hear the instructions of his word, and all the good advices which may be given him agreeable to the tenor of it; but be slow to speak, guarding solicitously against every rash and especially every proud and dictatorial expression; and slow to wrath,<sup>d</sup> not easily yielding to provocation, how injuriously soever he may be treated; For the wrath of man, even where it may be most ready to assume the title of religious zeal, worketh not, but on the contrary greatly obstructs, the righteousness of God;<sup>e</sup> instead of promoting the cause of true religion in the world, it is a reproach to it, and a means of exciting the pre-

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

<sup>c</sup> Kind of first-fruits.] It has often been observed, that this was addressed to the Jews who were first called to Christianity, before the gospel was preached to the Gentiles; but it will not follow, that all the dispersed of the twelve tribes to whom he addresses, were so called; and God did not intend there should afterwards be any distinction between them, and other Christians. I think it therefore much better to explain it, as referring to their Christian privileges in general.

<sup>d</sup> Slow to wrath.] It is well known that the Jewish doctors were apt to contend very fiercely about their different

opinions; but it is indeed so much the general infirmity of human nature, as unhappy experience teaches us, that the caution is of universal concern.

<sup>e</sup> Worketh not the righteousness of God.] Some think the meaning is, simply, A man, who is often a prey to angry passions, is incapable of performing that obedience which God requires; but promoting the interest of the kingdom of God may be included in the meaning of working his righteousness; and this false zeal is so often defended under that notion, that I was willing in the paraphrase to point out that idea plainly.

21 Wherefore lay aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. sect. II.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man, beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and

[*Ingr. word: ἐμπεφυγμένος.*] Some have translated this phrase the *natural*, the *innate*, or *internal* word, referring to what hath been sometimes called the *light within*: and it must be acknowledged that *ἐμπεφυγμένος* hath frequently this signification. But the version here given is undeniably justified by Bos and Elsner in loc. who illustrated this whole clause by some apposite and elegant quotations from the classics. The word of God is frequently compared to *seed*, or to a *plant*; particularly 1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iii. 9; in which sense it is here said to be *ἐμπεφυγμένος*, *ingrafted*, or *implanted* in their minds.

2 *Hearers only, deceiving.* [See.] The Jews did indeed place much of their religion in going up at proper times to the synagogue to hear the law read; and there

may possibly be an allusion to that disposition. The exact signification of *ἐμπεφυγμένος* is *imposing upon any by a sophistical shew of argument*; and here it is used with great propriety, as Mr. Superville has observed, Serin. Vol. IV. p. 124. Yet Dr. Edwards tells us the Jewish writers have a proverb among them, that "he who hears the law, and does not practice it, is like a man, who ploughs and sows, but never reaps."

<sup>b</sup> Bends down his whole attention, and looketh, &c.] I have endeavoured in the paraphrase to express the emphasis of the original *ὁ δὲ ὡραίου*. Compare 1 Pet. i. 12, where there is an evident allusion to the bending posture of the cherubim, who overshadowed the mercy seat in the holy of holies.

- sect. 11. trueſt and nobleſt liberty is obtained, whatever confinement it may ſeem to lay us under: he, I ſay, who not only takes a tranſient view of its contents and deſigns, but continues [therein,] deeply reflecting upon it, and charging his own ſoul with its important doctrines and precepts; *this man not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work* it enjoins: *this man, I ſay, ſhall be happy in his deed*, and ſhall find an advantage which mere speculative knowledge, though the moſt perfect and excellent in its kind, could not poſſibly ſecure. But then remember, that when I ſpeak of his deeds, I mean not on any account to excuſe him from paying proper regard to his words; for it is neceſſary I ſhould inculcate, *that, if any man among you ſeem to be religious, not reſolutely bridling his tongue*; and reining it in, to prevent thoſe ſallies to which it may ſometimes incline, *but deceiving his heart* with an imagination that a freedom from other acts of iniquity, or from groſs profaneneſs and wickedneſs of ſpeech, or that ſome good intention, notwithstanding his exorbitances of this kind, will excuſe him before God, even though he indulge himſelf in venting irregular paſſions under ſacred names; *this man's religion [is] but vain*, and will ſtand him in no real ſtead, whatever complacency he may at preſent find in his religious pretenſions.
- 26 If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.
- 27 Pure and undefiled religion, that which is clear and without any flaw or blemiſh, before the penetrating eyes of God, even the Father, conſiſts not merely in ſpeculations or forms, or in
- 26 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father,

[Not bridling, but deceiving, &c.] That excellent perſon and writer, Dr Butler, the late Biſhop of Durham, juſtly obſerves, that this is the proper rendering of the word; as if the apoſtle had ſaid, It is impoſſible that any man ſhould ſo much as ſeem to be religious, if he does not at leaſt think that he bridles his tongue; but if he deceive himſelf in this important branch of religion, he is deceived in the whole of it. Butler's Sermon, Vol. IV. p. 58. And indeed ſo many ſins of the tongue are committed without any apprehenſion of their being evil, that this caution, and this remark for the explication of it, is of great importance, conſidering how little

many zealots ſeem to be aware of the great evil of bitterly reproaching their brethren upon account of their religious differences: the ſin, which (as Mr Baxter juſtly obſerves, ſee his Works, Vol. IV. p. 447,) the apoſtle ſeems to have had particularly in his view.

[Without any flaw.] Archbiſhop Tillotſon has juſtly obſerved, that there ſeems here to be an alluſion to the excellence of a precious ſtone, which conſiſts much in its being καθαρά και ἀμώλωτος, clear, and without flaw, or cloud. (See his Works, Vol. II. p. 581.) And ſurely no gem is ſo precious or ornamental, as the lovely temper here deſcribed.

**I**n this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship;<sup>1</sup> but it is *this*, to take the oversight of orphans and widows in their affliction,<sup>m</sup> with a tender regard to their calamitous circumstances, [and] endeavouring to oversee them, in such a manner as to provide for their relief, performing to others in distress suitable offices of kindness and charity; at the same time, taking a prudent care to keep himself unspotted from those bad practices, and irregular indulgencies, which so generally prevail in the world about us, where so little either of religion or morality is to be found.

SECT.

11.

Jaures  
1. 27.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

WITH all gratitude let us direct our eyes and our hearts to the *unchangeable Father of lights*, and acknowledge every good *Verse 1* and every perfect gift, as descending from him; but above all, the invaluable gift of his regenerating grace, to which, if we are 15 the first fruits of his creatures, we are certainly indebted, and are thereby laid under the strongest engagements to consecrate ourselves continually to his service. Let us therefore listen with a most obedient regard to every intimation of his will, and set a 19 guard upon all our passions, that they may move in sweet and harmonious subjection to it. Especially, let us be slow to wrath, and not imagine that we can be justified in the exorbitances of our angry transports because they may possibly arise in the cause 20 of religion. The righteousness of God is not to be promoted, but on the contrary, will be disgraced and obstructed, by such outrageous ungovernable sallies. Let every impure and malignant 21 affection be therefore banished from our minds, and let us pray that the word of God may be so ingrafted into our souls, as to become the effectual means of our salvation. Let us not rest in 22 a mere forgetful hearing, or indeed in an ineffectual remembrance; but having looked into the gospel, that perfect law, which by binding the soul, gives it the truest liberty, let us by Divine assistance continue therein, and improve to the immediate pur-

\* <sup>1</sup> *Pure and undefiled religion*—consists not merely in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship.] The original word *ἀσποκλή*, which in conformity with our translators I have rendered *religion*, strictly signifies *Divine worship*; and intimates here, that no kind of religious services paid to the Deity, can be of any avail if we neglect the royal law of charity, and to visit the fatherless

and widows in their affliction; an idea which I have endeavoured to preserve in the paraphrase.

<sup>m</sup> *Taking the oversight of*, &c.] So *προνομιαν* properly signifies, and may import, entering into measures for their subsistence, as well as sometimes going to them, and conversing with them in their distresses. See the note on Mat. xxv. 36, Vol. II. § 166, note d.



sect. poses of reformation, whatever knowledge we thereby gain; correcting whatever we observe amiss in ourselves. Particularly, let us study a proper command over our tongues, and cultivate those charitable dispositions and offices, in which true and undefiled religion is here said to consist; that widows and orphans may give us their blessing, as their guardians and friends; and that an unspotted life, untainted with the vices of a degenerate age, may bear witness, that though in the world, we are not of it, and that we act in consistency with those sublime and holy ends to which we profess as Christians to aspire.

## S E C T. III.

*He cautions them against shewing any undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the Divine precepts; especially where the royal law of charity or universal benevolence was in question. James II. 1*  
—13

## JAMES II. 1.

sect. MY brethren, let me now caution you, that  
III. you hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, [the great Lord] of glory,<sup>a</sup> in a partial  
James respect of persons, so as give undue preference  
II. 1. to any upon account of their external circumstances; whereas the relation in which the meanest of your fellow-Christians may stand to him, who is so glorious a personage as the Son of God, should certainly recommend them to your regard and esteem. For I have observed something of this kind among many, which seems to require such an admonition as this; and have seen, that if a man come into your synagogue,<sup>b</sup> when you are met for religious worship, with a

## JAMES II. 1.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

<sup>a</sup> The Lord of glory.] Dr. Whitby would render it, *The glorious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*; but I cannot think that by any means necessary.

<sup>b</sup> Into your synagogue.] Mr. Cradock and Dr. Whitby explain this of their judicial assemblies, which the Jews held in their synagogues. \*Mat. x. 17; Acts xxii. 19. And they imagine it is probable, that when they were converted to Christianity, they preserved the same custom; and that the partiality here blamed, related to two persons, who had causes to try, when the visible superiority

given to one, in the setting him in a more honourable place than the other, would tend to pervert justice in his favour; and which Maimonides says the Jewish precepts particularly forbid. But the representing both the parties as seated, does not suit this interpretation. It is urged, that some civil distinctions might reasonably be made, and it must be allowed: but the apostle probably saw it rising too high; and in times of persecution, when poor people ventured their lives in behalf of Christianity, they had some peculiar title to honourable regard,

<sup>2</sup> For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring,

in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

gold ring<sup>c</sup> [and] other parts of a splendid dress, and at the same time there come in also a poor man in mean and sordid raiment; you are apt to show an undue regard to the former, and to put a visible slight on the latter, at his first appearance, without considering what may be the real character of the one or the other. And<sup>3</sup>

SECT.  
III.  
James  
II. 2.

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

whatever may be said in excuse for this, it is often blame-worthy; for if ye have a respect, as ye naturally have, for him who wears a splendid dress, and say to him, Sit there in an honourable place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; And distinguish<sup>4</sup> not in yourselves<sup>4</sup> according to the different characters of these two men, but only regard their outward appearance, you even become judges, who reason ill;<sup>e</sup> you seem by such a conduct to determine, that external circumstances are chiefly to be considered; which certainly is wrong, and if it were to be pursued, would produce very iniquitous and unjustifiable sentiments and practices.

5 Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

By such a conduct as this, you court the favour of the rich, and strongly intimate your contempt of the poor, as poor; but harken, my beloved brethren, and consider, for it is peculiarly worthy of your most attentive regard; Hath not God apparently chosen many who are among the poor of this world [to be] rich in faith;<sup>f</sup> and does it not appear that they are so? Are they not heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him; and just upon the point of being carried to a glory, that will eclipse that of the greatest monarchs on earth? And does it become you, believing this, to despise those who for any

<sup>a</sup> With a gold ring: χρυσόδακτυλῳ.] Perhaps this compound word might have been rendered, Having his fingers adorned with gold rings. The learned Albert has observed, that those who valued themselves upon the richness and luxury of their dress, were accustomed to deck their fingers with a considerable number of costly and valuable rings, frequently wearing several upon one finger. Observ. Philolog. in loc.

<sup>4</sup> And distinguish not in yourselves: καὶ κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς ἑνὶ κρίματι.] This I take to be the exact rendering of this clause, as the verb is of the middle signification, and

that it should not be read as in our English version, with an interrogation.

<sup>e</sup> Judges, who reason ill.] Our English version in this place is literal, but at the same time very obscure and ambiguous, Beza's observation is a just one, that the phrase in the original is an Hebraism, and it is accordingly rendered by him, *Judices male ratiocinantes, Judges who reason ill.*

<sup>f</sup> To be rich in faith.] The illipsis in these words of *εἶναι πλούσιον ἐν πίστει*, is common; as Bos, and after him, Albert, hath observed. Accordingly I have rendered it, *to be rich in faith.*

sacr. thing you know, may in a few days be carried  
 III. by angels into Abraham's bosom, and placed in  
 the most distinguished rank among the guests at  
 the celestial banquet? *But this indeed is the*

James  
 11. 6.

case; *you have often dishonoured the poor man*, though God may have condescended to visit him with such a gracious regard, and have enriched him with such inestimable mercies. On the other hand, *do not the rich whom you court with so much respect and assiduity, tyrannize over you, and drag you to their tribunals?* Are not most of the rich your persecutors, rather than  
 7 your friends? *Do they not blaspheme the honourable name of our Lord Jesus Christ by which you are called?* and do they not often compel you to blaspheme it, and inflict the severest penalties upon you if you refuse? So that on the whole, they often prove themselves the vilest of men. And can you think, that when this is the case, and you see so many poor saints courageously enduring these extremities, that you ought to fix your eyes so much on a glaring outside, and overlook that heroic worth which so often appears under a veil of poverty? I beseech you, learn to think more reasonably at all times, and especially to bring better sentiments into

8 your assemblies for public worship. And not only in such instances, *but in all others*, endeavour to act equitably; for *if you fulfil the noble and royal law*, which according to that expression of the scripture, ought with a kind of imperial authority to govern all our sentiments; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; ye do well*: that would be in every thing a rule to you, and particularly here; for none of you if you were reduced to poverty, would wish to be treated with marks of slight and contempt on that account, without any regard to your character in  
 9 other respects. *But if ye do in this partial manner, accept the persons of men, ye work iniquity therein, being convicted by the law I have just now mentioned, as transgressors of it.* And give me leave to say, that whatever zeal you may show for any other precepts, if convicted here, you become guilty before God, and for-

10 let your acceptance with him. *For whoever shall keep the whole law in every other instance,*

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole

law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

but allow himself to offend in one [particular,] he is in effect guilty of all; as he that committed but one capital crime, would as surely suffer death, as if he had committed all that ever were prohibited in that light. For it is certain, that he disregards the authority of the Lawgiver, which has established every precept equally; as it is evident, *he that says, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath also said, Thou shalt do no murder. If therefore thou art not an adulterer, but committest murder, thou art evidently a transgressor of the law.* Hence it appears, that it is not by a regard to the Divine authority that thou abstainest from the former crime, since that would equally have preserved thee from the latter. Let it therefore be your care, that ye so speak and so act as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty, by the glorious gospel, which is a dispensation that sets us at liberty from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and directs us to all the branches of that virtue and holiness, which is the truest liberty of the mind, and which being so excellent, must subject us to severer punishment if we presume to condemn it. And especially remember to maintain a regard to it, where the rules of charity are concerned. For you know a particular stress is laid upon this branch, as of the highest moment in the sight of God; as we are warned by our compassionate Lord himself, that on the one hand, *he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath not exercised mercy; and on the other hand, mercy rejoices against judgment,* and emboldens our hopes, when we stand before that merciful Being, whom we have resembled in that amiable part of his character.

SECT. III.

James II. 10.

11

12

13

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THE apostle could not intend to condemn those civil distinctions which are founded upon the different relations and circumstances of mankind in the present world; but surely God intended to teach us, how little esteem he sets upon riches, by bestowing them on many of the most undeserving of mankind, while he withholds them from his dearest children: and to admire them, and others, on account of their riches, while we pour contempt on the poor; as poor, though so many of them are

Verse 1

4

6

sect. distinguished by the riches of the Divine favour, must be highly  
 unreasonab, and to God highly offensive. As for those who  
 are poor in this world, but rich in faith, let them adore the Di-  
 vine munificence to them, and think with pleasure of those dur-  
 able riches, and of that everlasting kingdom, which God has  
 prepared for them as their inheritance.

8 Whatever our stations be, let us pray that the royal law may  
 be inscribed upon our hearts, and that we may love our neigh-  
 9 bours as ourselves; guarding against that mean and prohibited  
 respect of persons, which would expose us to conviction, as  
 transgressors of the law. Let us also learn to guard against that  
 partiality in our obedience to it, which is utterly inconsistent  
 10 with sincerity. Let us remember, that the Divine authority  
 equally establishes every precept of it, and that the generous  
 11 nature of the gospel-dispensation, as a law of liberty, will be a  
 12 sad aggravation of our presumptuous violation of it. A con-  
 sciousness of those many defects and imperfections, which  
 the best of men may see reason to charge themselves with, should  
 certainly engage our most earnest applications to God for mercy;  
 and as we desire to obtain it, let it be our care to exercise mercy  
 13 to others, both in the candour of our censures on the one hand,  
 and the readiness of our liberality on the other.

#### SECT. IV.

*The apostle largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere historical  
 faith; and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations,  
 the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal  
 salvation. James II. 14, to the end.*

##### JAMES II. 14.

SECT. IT is with real grief that I perceive many of  
 IV. you seem highly to value yourselves upon the  
 profession you make of the Christian religion,  
 without being suitably impressed with a practi-  
 cal sense of its important principles, and influ-  
 11. 14. ed to a life agreeable to them. But *what  
 advantage [is there] my brethren, if any one  
 say, he has faith, but has not suitable works;*

JAMES II. 14.  
 WHAT doth it  
 profit, my  
 brethren, though  
 man say he hath  
 faith, and have not

\* *If any one say he has faith, but has  
 not suitable works.* I am surprised at the  
 immense pains commentators have taken,  
 to reconcile St. Paul and St. James; and  
 the many hypotheses they have formed  
 for that purpose. Where is to me nothing  
 is more evident, than that the idea is they

affix to the words, *faith*, and *works*, are  
 entirely different. St. James, by the word  
*faith*, means simply an assent to the truth  
 of religious principles, without determining  
 whether it be, or be not, effectual; and then  
 declares, that, in case this assent does not  
 produce good *works*, that is, the solid vir-

*A pretence to charity, without its proper fruits, is vain.* 151

works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food;

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea a man may say, Thou hast

to support the justice of that pretension? Can such a *faith*, as may be separated from good works, *save him*?

Consider the case, when men make professions of charity, without producing the proper fruits of it, and you will easily see how vain such a pretension is. *If, for instance, a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food for the subsistence of life, And one of you, who calls himself a Christian say to them, We heartily pity your case, and feel the tender emotions of that love which our relation to each other requires; depart therefore in peace, whithersoever the providence of God may lead you, and I sincerely wish that you may meet with suitable accommodations: may ye be clothed and sheltered, warmed, and fed to the full; but, with all these soft addresses, if ye give not to them either food, or raiment, or any money to purchase the things necessary for the body; what [does it] profit them to be addressed with such hypocritical professions of love? Yea, does it not rather seem a cruel mockery, than a real kindness? So also faith, how zealously so ever it may be professed, and how orthodox so ever those articles are to which an assent is given, if it have not suitable works to attend it, being by itself, is dead,* and producing no substantial fruit, is altogether insignificant. *But one better instructed in Christianity, may perhaps say to one of these forward professors, in order to bring matters to a short issue, Thou sayest that thou hast faith, and I make it appear*

SECT. 17.

James II. 15.

tues of the heart and life, it cannot be accepted by God. Whereas St. Paul by the word *faith* means a cordial and vital assent to Divine truth, which influences the heart to a holy temper, and according to the gracious terms of the gospel, entitles a man to Divine acceptance, without any regard at all to the Mosaic law, and previous to the production of any of those good works which will naturally be the fruit of it. Had Luther calmly considered this, he would not have denied the *inspiration* of St. James, out of regard to his supposed *heterodoxy* in the business of *justification*; nor would one of his followers have presumed to charge him expressly with *lying*, as Lim-

borch tells us he did, *Mentitus est Jacobus in caput suum.* Limborch Theol. 1. iii. 16.

<sup>b</sup> *Faith, if it hath not works, &c.*] From this passage it appears that we should not confine the idea of the word *faith*, as used by St. James, to a mere assent; for it would be an absurd supposition, that a mere assent should have any *works*. By this word therefore St. James, (as we observed in the former note,) means simply an *assent*, whether it be or be not *effectual*. Nor is it indeed the assent that saves when accompanied with *works*. So that the apostle's assertion is more critically and correctly true, than many of his commentators have apprehended.

- SECT. in my life and conversation, that *I have works*, faith, and I have  
 IV. which naturally spring from that principle; works: shew me thy  
 give me then the evidence I offer thee; *shew me* faith without thy  
 thy faith by thy works; and I will also in re- works, and I will  
 turn shew thee my faith by my works; let us, shew thee my faith  
 without quarrelling about different explications by my works.
- 17 effects upon our tempers and lives. *Thou assur-* 18 Thou believest  
 edly believest that there is one only true and liv- that there is one  
 ing God, and therein thou doest well; it is the God; thou doest  
 grand fundamental principle of all true religion. well; the devils also  
 But remember, it is a principle common to believe and tremble.
- 19 they know they are inevitably doomed. *But* 20 But wilt thou  
*wilt thou know, O vain empty man, who retest* know, O vain man,  
 in that which might be found in equal, or in that faith without  
 higher degrees, in the infernal spirits, *that faith* works is dead?
- 21 pose that can be expected from it. Take an instance of this in the most celebrated of all the patriarchs; I mean, the instance of *Abraham, our great and illustrious father: was he not plainly justified by works, when, in consequence of that full persuasion he had of a Divine commission and command to do it, he offered his son Isaac upon the altar,* intending, in obedience to what he apprehended the will of God, actually to have slain him; and to have trusted in God to accomplish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from him, by raising him from the dead. *Thou seest then in this instance, that faith co-operated with his works, and animated him to zeal and self-denial in them; and faith was perfected by works; the integrity of*
- 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect:

[Shew me thy faith, &c.] This version is so very different from our own, that many of my English readers will be much surprised at it.—But I have followed the most and best copies which

read it, as in the margin of our bibles, *ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ*—and *ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ*, though some copies read the first clause *ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ*, which our translators have followed.

23 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.

34 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

it was made fully apparent to himself, to angels, and to God. *And thus the scripture was fulfilled, which says, (Gen. xv. 6,) referring to what passed long before this, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;*<sup>d</sup> and in consequence of this he was treated by God with such peculiar endearment, that *he was even called the Friend of God*; as it is said, (Isa. xli. 8,) the seed of Abraham my friend. This proved the sincerity of his faith, and that he was in some degree worthy the honour of the Divine friendship. *You see then by this instance of the great father of the faithful, if the characters of the children are to be estimated in the same manner as those of the father, that a man is justified by works and not by faith only:* it is by no means enough, that the great principles of religion be credited, if they have not also their practical influence on the heart and life. *In like manner, also, I might illustrate the matter by the farther instance of Rahab, who had been the harlot, though afterwards reclaimed by Divine grace: was she not justified by works, when in consequence of that faith which she professed in the God of Israel, she received, entertained, and sheltered the spies, who came to observe the state of Jericho, and at the apparent hazard of her life, concealed them from those that came to search after them; till at length, knowing which way the pursuers would go, she sent them out another way, and so made effectual provision for their escape. And on such principles must all others expect justification and salvation; for as the body, without the spirit, is but a dead carcass, how fair and entire soever it may appear, and will at length fall into putrefaction and dissolution; so such a faith as remains without the substantial fruits of good works, which ought ever to attend it, is also dead: it now appears*

SECT.  
IV.  
James  
II. 23.

<sup>d</sup> *The scripture was fulfilled, &c.] This very text St. Paul quotes Rom. iv. 3, to prove that Abraham was justified by faith; which plainly shews, that the faith by which St. Paul says he was justified, was*

*such a faith as includes good works in it, as a certain principle of them; and consequently, established what was said above, for reconciling these two apostles in the easiest manner.*



## 154 *Reflections on the connection between faith and works.*

SECT. as a carcase in the sight of God, and as such

IV. will ere long perish.

### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 27, &c. LET this great and important lesson, which the apostle here teaches so plainly, and inculcates so largely, be never forgotten.

It is true indeed, (as St. Paul elsewhere fully proves,) that we are *justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law*. The works of the Mosaic law are by no means necessary; and it is not by our obedience to any law, but by embracing and resting upon the mercy of God in Christ, for our salvation, that we obtain it.

26 Nevertheless, it is vain to pretend to such a faith, if good works are not produced by it; and we might as soon expect the guardianship and counsel, the offices and consolations of friendship, from a dead corpse, as happiness from a mere assent, even to the

18 most important doctrines. Let us therefore endeavour to shew

21 our faith by our works. Let us be ready with Abraham, to offer up our dearest comforts to God. Let us, with Rahab, be

willing even to expose our lives in the defence of God's people and his cause; otherwise our faith being of no better a kind than

19 that of the devils, will leave us the companions of their misery and despair; even though the conviction should now be so powerful as to make us tremble; or a false persuasion of our enjoying privileges to which we are utter strangers, should give us strong an emotion to any of the softer passions.

Let faith then be *active and influential*. Let love be without 13, 16 *dissimulation*. Let us not love *merely in word, but in deed*, and charge it upon our consciences to be ready to authenticate by the most substantial offices of humanity, the profession we at any time make of friendly wishes, or kind intentions. Otherwise, such professions will be worse than unprofitable, as, by encouraging only a false dependence and expectation, they will make the disappointment proportionably grievous and afflictive, to those whom we hypocritically, or lightly, pretended to compassionate or succour.

### S E C T. V.

*The Apostle cautions them against being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and recommends a strict government of the tongue, as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance.* James III. 1—12.

JAMES III. 1.

AND now, my brethren, give me leave to MY brethren, be caution you against another evil which I

JAMES III. 1.

# They should not be forward to assume the office of teachers; 156

not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

have seen some reason to apprehend, and to press you, that *ye be not many teachers*; <sup>a</sup> that none of you rashly undertake the office of teachers, which many are ready to intrude themselves into, without due qualifications, or a regular call: but I would urge you to be cautious against such an assuming disposition, as *knowing that we who bear that office, must expect that we shall undergo greater and stricter judgment than others in a more private station of life.* Th<sup>2</sup>

SECT.  
V.  
James  
III. 1.

2 For if many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

many infirmities, to which the best of us are subject, may indeed teach us to think with awe of that exact trial we are then to undergo; *for in many things we all offend*; <sup>b</sup> we are too ready to trip and stumble in our walk. And it is peculiarly worthy our attention here, that *if any one offend not in word, [he is] a perfect man*,<sup>c</sup> arrived at so high a pitch and improvement in virtue, that it may be concluded, that he is *able also to bridle in the whole body*; as it is frequently much more difficult to govern our tongues in a becoming manner, than to avoid enormities in our actions. *Behold, we put bridles into the 3 mouths of horses, that they may obey us, according to their direction; and strong, and sometimes furious, as those creatures are, we turn them hither and thither, so as to influence the motion of their whole body. Behold also how the ships, 4 though they be many of them so large, and sometimes agitated by violent winds, are turned by a very small helm, whithersoever the steers-*

3 Behold, we put bits in the horse's mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small

<sup>a</sup> *Not many teachers.*] Our translators render it *masters*, as *διδασκαλῶν* is frequently rendered; and it is generally explained of *impressions and censorious dictations*, as many of the Jewish zealots were. But when he forbids *many* to be such, he seems to allow that *some* may; and consequently I think *teachers* ought to be explained in an innocent and indifferent sense, as in the paraphrase. And though the word *αριστος*, in the following clause, may usually signify *condemnation*, yet sometimes it means *judgment* in the general; particularly Mat. vii. 2; Acts xxiv. 25; Rom. v. 16; (where it is evidently distinguished from *κατακριμα*.) 1 Cor. vi. 7; Heb. vi. 2; Rev. xx. 4; as on the other hand, *αριστος*, which generally

signifies *judgment* alone, sometimes includes *condemnation* in it. Mat. xxiii. 33; Mark iii. 29; Heb. x. 27.

<sup>b</sup> *All offend.*] The word *παραγομεν* properly speaking, signifies, *we trip*; and Dr. Barrow (see his Work, vol. I. p. 129,) has justly observed, that as the general course of life is called, *a way*, and particular actions, *steps*; so going on in a regular course of right action, is *walking* uprightly; and acting amiss, *tripping* or *stumbling*.

<sup>c</sup> *Perfect man.*] It is certain a man whose words are *impressive*, may possibly have some imperfections; it shews therefore in how limited a sense the word *perfect* is to be taken; and the observation may be applied to many other passages.

SECT. *men pleaseth,*<sup>d</sup> and the waving of his hand determines their direction. *So also the tongue,* though it is *but a little member, yet boasteth great things,* pretends, and that not unjustly, to have a great deal of influence upon the world. Behold, and observe, *how great a quantity of materials a little fire kindleth into a blaze.* And thus *the tongue [is] a fire,* which often produces a great conflagration: it is *a little world of iniquity*<sup>e</sup> of itself. *The tongue is so set among our members,* holds such a rank and place, [*that*] indeed *it defiles the whole body, and inflames the whole course and circle of nature,*<sup>f</sup> and is itself also *set on fire by hell;* the infernal spirit influences the heart, and its wickedness overflows by the tongue, and tends indeed, by its fatal consequences, to produce a very hell upon earth. It is observable, that *every species of wild beasts, and birds, of reptiles and fishes,* though some of them take shelter in inaccessible deserts, and others bury themselves in the earth; though some mount the air, and others have their abode deep in the watery element; yet still every sort *is subdued,*<sup>g</sup> and has in some instances or other been subdued, by men; and many, whose natures are fiercest, are so tamed as to do the human-spec-

helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of man kind:

<sup>d</sup> *Whithersoever the steersman pleaseth.*] As the word is, *πορευομένη* which signifies any person that sits at the helm, and not necessarily the pilot who is called by way of eminence *ὁ κυβερνήτης*, I thought it best to render it *whithersoever* though I confess the remark and distinction to be a matter of small importance. I know not how well to express in English the force of *ἐμπροσθεν κυβερνήτης*, which admirably represents the propriety with which, in a storm, a man at the helm on a critical occasion turns his hand. See Dr. Owen on the Spirit, p. 57.

<sup>e</sup> *A world of iniquity:* *ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας.* (Elsner Observ. Sacr. in loc.) gives a very singular translation of this clause, *The tongue is the adornment of unrighteousness;* referring to those specious colourings by which wicked men endeavour to excuse or conceal their criminal conduct.

<sup>f</sup> *Circle of nature.*] So I thought *τοῦτο* might be rendered, which most exactly signifies *a wheel from the revolutions*

famed. And perhaps it may intimate, how the mischief done by the tongue often comes round about. A consideration, which, were it not intimated by the expression, is well worthy the attention of every wise man. Elsner, Albert, and Bos, by this phrase understand *our savage generations of men*, as if the apostle had said *The tongue inflamed our forefathers*, it hath the same bad influence on us, and is likely to have on our posterity.

<sup>g</sup> *Is subdued.*] So I choose to render *ἐμαρτυροῦμαι*, *rather than tamed*, that it may include the *conquering* great and mighty fishes of the sea, such as sharks and whales: of which it seems less proper to say they are *tamed*, as that generally imports a kind of *harmless familiarity* to which some savage beasts are indeed brought; but of which large fishes are in their nature incapable, and it may be questioned whether some other animals are not so likewise; and such it was most to the apostle's purpose to mention.

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

cies no harm. *But the tongue no man can entirely subdue*, neither the tongues of others, nor his own, so that it shall not in some instances be hurtful; for *[it is] an insuperable evil*, and like a serpent or an adder, full of mortal venom, by which sometimes death, and even damnation itself is occasioned. *By it we sometimes bless God, even the Father*; and it is our glory, when we make use of it in that sacred and honourable employment; and yet sometimes this noble instrument is degraded to the vilest purposes, and by it we curse and revile men, our brethren, who are made after the likeness of God, and honoured with his image. *Out of the*

SECT.

v.

James  
III. 8.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

same mouth proceedeth the blessing and the curse, and the same tongue is the instrument of expressing both: and too frequently when the act of devotion is over, the act of slander, or outrage and insult commences. Alas! my brethren, these things ought not so to be: it is a shame to human nature, and it is surely a much fouler reproach to a Christian profession. *Does a fountain*

11 Both a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

from the same opening send forth alternately, and at different times, sweet [water] and bitter? It is not known in the natural, and it ought not to be known in the moral world. *Can a fig-tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine, figs?* No, but every tree has its own proper productions. *So no fountain produces brackish water and sweet.* In like manner there ought to be a great deal of care, that we maintain a consistency in our discourses, and that if we profess religion and devotion, we speak at all times, as those who are often employing our speech to these noble purposes. So shall we honour God, and promote the peace of society, and of our own minds; whereas otherwise, we shall endure both; yea, and injure others, and ourselves the more, in consequence of the profession which we make of religion.

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? or a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET this pathetic discourse of the apostle concerning the difficulty and importance of governing our tongues aright, engage us to the strictest care on this great article of practical religion, of which so many are careless, in which the most are so far

SECT. V. deficient, as to entitle those to the character of perfect men,  
 who do not here offend. Let us entreat the assistance of Divine  
 grace, that we may keep our mouths as with a bridle; (Psal.  
 Ver. 2. xxxix. 1 :) that we may steer this important helm aright, lest by  
 the mismanagement of it, we shipwreck even our eternal hopes.  
 6 Let us be cautious of every spark, where there are so many com-  
 bustible materials; and take heed, lest we, and others, be defiled,  
 and infernal flames kindled and propagated. It is indeed a diffi-  
 cult, but in consequence of this a glorious toil, far more glorious  
 7 than to subdue the fiercest animals, or the haughtiest enemies :  
 let us therefore resolutely make the attempt, and learn to em-  
 8 ploy our tongues, as indeed *the glory of our frame*, to *bless God*  
*even the Father*. And let the remembrance of that similitude of  
 God, in which men are formed, make us tender of all their inter-  
 ests; and especially careful that we do not injure them by un-  
 kind reproaches, or detracting speeches; and so much the ra-  
 ther, that we may maintain a consistency between the words of  
 devotion addressed to God, and those of converse with our fel-  
 11 low-creatures. So shall the well-spring of wisdom, rising up in  
 our hearts, and streaming forth from our lips, be as a flowing  
 brook. Let those who are by Providence called to be teachers  
 of others, set a double guard upon their words, not only in  
 public but in private too, as peculiar notice will be taken of  
 them; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be great-  
 1 ly affected by the tenour of their discourses. And let the aw-  
 ful account which such are to give, the greater judgment they  
 are to expect, prevent any from intruding themselves into such  
 an office, without suitable qualifications, and a regular call. May  
 2 God enable them to judge rightly concerning that call; and  
 where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish them for their  
 work, and his mercy cover those many imperfections, which the  
 best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

## S E C T. VI.

*The apostle urges a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them  
 against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the  
 world which tends to excite them; to restrain which he recom-  
 mends an humble application to God for Divine influences.*  
 James III. 13.—IV. 10.

JAMES III. 13.

MANKIND are naturally desirous of the repu-  
 tation of an understanding superior to others :  
 consider what is the best display of it. *Who [is]*  
*wise, and a man of sense among you, let him*

JAMES III. 13.

WHO is a wise  
 man and endu-  
 ed with knowledge

amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. *shew himself to be possessed of the most valuable kind of knowledge, by exhibiting out of a good, holy, and useful conversation, his honourable and beneficial works.* And let him do this, not with vain ostentation or rigorous zeal, but with the meekness and gentleness of true wisdom. SECT. VI. James III. 13.

14 But if ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. *But if ye have bitter zeal against each other, and uncharitable contention in your hearts, boast not of your improvements in Christianity, and lie not against the truth by such groundless pretensions.*

15 This wisdom descends, not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. *This is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, and which that religion that our Divine Master brought from heaven teaches us; but it [is] on the contrary, earthly, sensual, and even diabolical<sup>a</sup>. It takes its rise from considerations relating to the present world, objects which gratify only our senses, the inferior part of our nature, and which are the baits of the devil's temptations, by which he endeavours to dishonour our profession, and ruin our souls.*

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. *For it is evident in fact, that where uncharitable zeal and contention [is,] there [is] wild confusion and disorder, and every other evil and pernicious work; all the turbulent passions are in exercise, and a thousand irregular and fatal effects are produced.*

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. *But the wisdom [which is] from above of celestial original, is first pure, from all unclean and corrupt mixtures, and agreeable to the tenor of Divine, and evangelical truth; then in consequence of that, peaceable and pacific, desirous to make and maintain peace; moderate and gentle, easily to be intreated, persuaded and reconciled, where any matters of disgust may have arisen; full of mercy and good fruits, compassionate to the afflicted, beneficent to all; without partiality to those of our own sentiments and denominations, to the injury of others; and without hypocrisy, meaning all the kindness it expresses, and glad to extend its good offices as universally as possible.*

18 And the fruit of the wisdom is peace, meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, good offices as universally as possible. And thus the good man recommends and adorns religion, and in this he finds his own truest ac-

<sup>a</sup> Earthly, sensual, diabolical.] Dr. Bates supposes this refers to the three grand temptations of the world, avarice, a love of pleasure, and ambition; the first

of which is earthly, the second sensual, the third diabolical, being the sin by which the devil's fall. Bates's Works, p. 239

SECT. VI. count; for whereas the wrath of man, as I observed, worketh not the righteousness of God, *the blessed fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those that make peace*<sup>b</sup>; persons of such a spirit promote the spread of the gospel, that great root of righteousness; and while a harvest of goodness by this means springs up in the minds of others, they shall themselves in due time reap joy and blessing in the comforts of the present life, and in the fruits of a glorious immortality.

IV. 1. On the other hand, when we come to consider the effects of a contrary disposition, how melancholy and how dreadful are they! *Whence [are] wars and fightings among you?*<sup>c</sup> *Whence all the shocking scenes, which private quarrels, and public wars occasion; even all the carnage of the field of slaughter, and the barbarous attempts which human creatures and brethren make to destroy one another? [Is it] not hence, from your sensual lusts, and appetites, which first tear in your members; that is, do first, as it were, give battle to your rational powers, and then turn the several members of your bodies into weapons of mischief and destruction? Ye covet this and that pleasure and gratification, and in your present circumstances, ye find that ye have not*<sup>d</sup> the means of procuring it; and therefore

IV. 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come then not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members.

<sup>b</sup> *The fruit of righteousness, &c.* *Peace*—possibly it might have been rendered, *The seed of righteousness, in peace is sown for them that make peace*. As if it had been said, They who show a peaceful temper, (supplanting the poison from right principles) may assure themselves, that they shall reap a harvest, in a world where it becomes a lawless iniquitousness. A seed is sown, and it will spring up, and make them ample amends for all the injuries they have sustained in a contentious world.

<sup>c</sup> *He that fight us.* The contentious spirit of the Jews was very apparent, and drew on them so many deceptions; as many writers have justly observed on this text. Plato says, "Nothing but the body, and its lusts and appetites, kindle sedition, quarrels, and wars in the world." But Mr. Blackwall observes that the sentiment is here expressed with greater vivacity; and another beautiful metaphor is added,

*Your lusts which war in your members*; intimating, that there is a state of civil war in the soul either between sensual inclinations and conscience, or between one lust and another. Blackwall's Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 212.

<sup>d</sup> *Ye covet and have not*—Dr. Whately explains this particularly of the Jews. They *lusted* after two things, *riches* from *tribute*, and *dominion* over neighbouring nations; and they continually prayed for these, without considering whether they were indeed agreeable to the will of God; and almost at nothing more than the gratification of their sensual desires in them. But the apostle seems to imply, they would have had the desirable things here referred to, if they had asked *aright*; and I think, that a good reason for the more *extensive* sense, which, according to my usual manner, I have given to the words.

have not; ye kill, ye are ready to kill<sup>e</sup> one another, because you stand in each other's way, and one possesses what another would be glad to possess, even though it were at the expence of the owner's life. *Because ye thus earnestly desire for yourselves, and envy each other the possession of what ye cannot obtain, ye quarrel and fight, make one injury beget another, till ye come to wage a confirmed war with each other. Yet after all, ye miss the surest way of obtaining the most desirable blessings, which would be earnestly to seek them of God in prayer; but this is omitted, and so ye have not the blessings ye might otherwise easily obtain, because you ask not.* Or 3

if you do pray, it is with little devotion, and so to little purpose: *ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, without a becoming faith and fervency, or without that regard to the glory of God, which ought to animate all your desires. Whereas ye seek these things only, that ye may squander them away upon your lusts, and indulge yourselves in the height of luxurious pleasure, while your poor brethren are in the last necessity; and surely the dearer any man is to God, the less likely will he be to succeed in such petitions as these.* *Ye adulterers and*

*adulteresses,* (for I cannot give you a milder name, while guilty of this spiritual whoredom, while you are lavishing away your best affections upon objects so far beneath him to whom you have vowed them,) *know ye not, that the friendship of the world, which you so much court and caress, is enmity against God? Whoever therefore will be a friend to the world, and resolves to pursue it as his chief good, is by a necessary consequence declared and adjudged to be an enemy<sup>†</sup> of God, as he will be led into that rebellion against his law, which makes up the grand character of that enmity.* *Do you*

*5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in think the scripture speaks in vain in all the pas-*

<sup>4</sup> *Ye kill.*] Beza and Erasmus Schindus would read it *ye envy*, though without the authority of a single manuscript. But *slaughter* is agreeable enough to what was said above of wars and fighting, and to the contentious and sanguinary temper of the Jews.

<sup>†</sup> *Is adjudged to be an enemy.*] So Dr. Barrow, (see his Works, Vol. I. p. 228,) justly observes, that the word *adjudged* signifies; and there is a considerable emphasis in the expression: it is now declared and adjudged beyond controversy that he is an enemy of God.

SFCT.  
VI.  
James  
IV. 2.



SECT.

VI.

James  
IV. 5.

sages in which it guards us against such a temper as this, and leads the mind directly to God, as the supreme good; teaching us to abandon every thing for him? Or *does the Holy Spirit that dwells in us Christians, lust to envy?* does it encourage these worldly affections, this strife and envying which we have reprov'd? or can it be imagined, that we who appear to have so much of the Spirit, have any interested views in the cautions we give, and would persuade you from the pursuit of the world, because we should envy you the enjoyment of it?

6 No: But we rather pity such fond and wretched attachments; for *he gives us greater degrees of grace*, than to leave us the slaves of so wretched a disposition: *as it is said* in those ever-memorable words, (Prov. iii. 34,) *God sets himself in battle-array against the proud, but to the lowly he giveth grace and favour. Subject yourselves therefore to God*; and being listed in his army, keep the rank<sup>b</sup> which he has assigned you; *resist the devil* steadily and courageously, as the great enemy of your eternal salvation; and though he may for a while combat you with his varied temptations, *he will at length flee from you*, and your progress in religion, and your victory over your spiritual adversaries, *will grow daily more easy. Draw near to God* with humble submission and earnest prayer, *and he will draw near to you with mercy. Cleanse [your] hands, O ye sinners*, from all the pollutions with which they are stained; and rest not merely in a freedom from evil actions, but labour to *purify [your] hearts* as much as possible, from all irregularities of affection. *O ye double minded* who continue thus wavering between God and the world, and have as yet learned to exert so little resolution in religion, that it is matter of doubt, whether you have any principles of it at all. And when you reflect upon the former part of life, so unprofitably and so unworthily spent, *lament the guilt of such a*

vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded

9 Be afflicted, and

<sup>a</sup> Does the Spirit—lust, &c.] This rendering, (with Dr. Whitby,) I prefer to our own, which intimates the latter clause to be a quotation. Bishop Patrick supposes it is borrowed from Numb. xi. 29. But

I think it would be doing great violence to that text, to suppose this an intended quotation from thence.

<sup>b</sup> Keep the rank.] So the expression *understand* properly and exactly signifies.

mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

conduct; and mourn and weep for the miseries to which you have exposed yourselves by it. And instead of these vain indulgencies, let your laughter be turned into mourning, and [your] ill-timed joy, into expressions of the deepest sorrow. (On the whole, humble yourselves in the very dust before the Lord, whom by your sins you have offended; and you may hope he will return to you in the methods of his mercy, and raise you up again from that prostrate condition.

SECT.

VI.

James

IV. 9.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

If we desire the character of *wisdom*, let us learn from the oracles of eternal truth, how it is to be obtained—by *meekness* and *a good conversation*. Let us avoid that infernal wisdom, here so severely and justly branded, which consists in knowing the most effectual methods to distress others. On the contrary, let us pray, and study, and labour for that which is from above, and of which so amiable a character is here given. And so far as it can be obtained without injuring conscience, let us cultivate universal peace; and let a gentle and placable temper, an impartial and sincere disposition, be ever inviolably preserved, even when we are obliged to contend with others about matters of the highest importance; remembering, that the more sacred the cause is, the more solicitous we should be that we do not injure it by a passionate or iniquitous management of it. Thus let us sow the fruits of righteousness in peace, and wait the promised harvest; leaving wars and contentions to others, lamenting them, and praying that God would cause them entirely to cease. And that we may be less obnoxious to those temptations, whereby others are betrayed into them, let us endeavour to guard against those lusts and passions which give a disproportionate value to the objects about which those contentions arise. Does God brand them with this character of adultery? Let us preserve our souls pure from such affections, as ever we desire that our prayers should be acceptable to God. May his grace subdue all the workings of pride, of luxury, and of envy; and produce in our hearts more and more of that humility, to which he will give more grace; engaging us, when thus invited, to *draw near to him*, to ask aright what we need from him, trusting his promise that he will *draw nigh to us*, and that when we *humble ourselves before him*, he will *raise us up*. *Cleansing our hands*, let us endeavour to *purify our hearts* too. So may those who have hitherto been double-minded, hope to attain an establishment in religion, in conjunction with that established peace, which no carnal affection, even when most fully gratified, can either afford or admit.

Chap.

iii. 13.

15

17

18

Chap.

iv. 1.

2

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## S E C T. VII.

*The apostle suggests particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin ; and concludes the section with encouraging and exhorting afflicted and oppressed Christians to wait patiently for the coming of their Lord. James, IV. 11.—V. 8.*

## JAMES IV. 11.

SECT.  
VII.  
James  
IV. 11.

**LET** me now charge you, my brethren, that ye speak not evil of one another ; for he that speaketh evil of [his] brother, and judgeth [his] brother with a rash severity, therein speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law ; condemning it as if it were an erroneous rule, in so expressly forbidding such a conduct<sup>a</sup>. But if thou thus judgest the law, and passest, as it were, a condemning sentence upon it, thou art then not a doer of the law, but a judge. And how the arrogance of setting up such a superiority to the great Governor of the universe will pass, when it comes under his final review, it well becomes you seriously to consider.

For it is certain, *there is one* great almighty Law-giver, who is able abundantly to assert the honour of his own government ; and as he can save his faithful and obedient subjects from the greatest extremity of danger and calamity, so he is also able to destroy the most obstinate and audacious rebel, and to smite him with irrecoverable ruin in the full career of his crimes. Who art thou therefore, that judgest another ? and darest to invade the office of this supreme and universal Law-giver, and thereby exposest thyself to his condemnation.

13 But to insist no further upon this ; let me now turn myself to those who are quite immersed in their worldly schemes, and promise themselves assuredly an opportunity to accomplish them.

## JAMES IV. 11.

**SPEAK** not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law : but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one Law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy : who art thou that judgest another ?

13 Go to now, ye

<sup>a</sup> *Speaketh evil of [his] brother, &c.]* Dr. Whitby explains this of the unbelieving Jews reproaching their Christian brethren for their non-observance of the Mosaic law : and thinks, the apostle intimates,

that as the ceremonial law was not originally intended for the Gentiles, this conduct was a reflection upon the wisdom of God in giving it. But I choose the more extensive explication.

that say, To-day, or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

*Come now, ye that say, To-day or To-morrow, we will go to such a city, and spend a year there, and traffic, and get gain by our merchandize, and then return and enjoy the fruits of our labours.* Alas! upon what an uncertainty do you

proceed in such a supposition as this! *whereas*, instead of being able to count on a year to come, *ye know not even what [shall be] on the morrow*, and much less, what the days and months of a year may bring forth. *For what [is] your life*, upon the continuance of which all your worldly projects depend? *For it is only like a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away*, and is seen no more; how gay soever its form might be, and how wide soever it might have extended itself. *Whereas ye* 15

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.

*[ought] to say*, in consideration of this, *if the great Lord of our lives will please to lengthen them, we shall live, and do this or that*, intimating even by your manner of speaking, the sense that you have, of his being able at pleasure to cut you short in all your purposes and appointments. *But now you rejoice in your boastings*; 16 you take pleasure in this arrogant and confident manner of talking: *whereas, all such rejoicing is evil*, and ought to be corrected: And so much 17 the rather, as you have been better instructed than many others, and *therefore* ought to shew the good effect of these instructions. *For to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is aggravated sin*; and it would have been much better for him, that he had wanted that degree of knowledge he had, than that he should thus abuse it.

Put now ye upon Your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

V. 1. Go to now,

I direct these things especially to those who V. 1. have the advantage of the Christian revelation and institutions; but I confine not myself wholly to them. Let others pay them regard, in proportion to the degree in which they have opportunities of attaining Divine knowledge. Let them take the greatest care, that they do not abuse it. And let those especially be careful, whom Providence has distinguished by the fullness of their circumstances; which often proves a temptation to vice, though it should in all reason and gratitude be an engagement to virtue and piety. Experience will soon teach many

SECT.

VII.

James  
IV. 13.

14

15

16

17

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VII.  
James  
V. 1.

such the vanity of those things in which they pride themselves, and which embolden them in their transgressions of the divine law. *Come now therefore ye rich men,<sup>b</sup> weep, and even howl over the miseries that are speedily coming upon you, in those days which are nearly approaching.* You have been solicitous to lay up abundant stores for your future subsistence and security; but *your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.* Your gold, and your silver which should have been brightened by a generous circulation, have been hoarded up, till they are cankered, and their rust shall be a witness against you in the sight of God, and so bring upon you such awful rebukes from him, that it shall, as it were, eat into your flesh, with an anguish as piercing and corroding as fire itself. *Ye have laid up treasures for the last days;<sup>c</sup>* for the last days are now coming, and the enemy shall seize and dissipate them all to your infinite vexation and distress. *Behold the wages of the labourers, who have reaped your fields, who have been defrauded by you of their due reward, crieth for vengeance against you; and the out-cries of those who have gathered in your harvest, have come into the ears of the Lord of hosts.* *Ye have lived delicately and luxuriously upon the earth, indulging yourselves in every desire that rose in your minds, without restraint. Ye have pampered your hearts, as beasts are fed for a day of slaughter;<sup>d</sup>* and truly to you it is much nearer than you are aware. And well has the vengeance been deserved by you; for *ye have condemned, [and] at last murdered the righteous one, the Son of God him-*

ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, that shall come upon you.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed

<sup>b</sup> *Ye rich men*, &c. Josephus, (Bell. Jud. v. 20, 30; iv. 19,) particularly observes, how much the rich men suffered by the Romans in the Jewish war. — I have rendered *συνεχόμενα τὰς συμφοραῖς*, miseries, which are coming upon you, and I think it more agreeable to the original than our English version *it is now coming* being a participle of the present tense.

<sup>c</sup> *The last days.*] This phrase does not merely signify, for the time to come, but for that period, when the whole Jewish economy was to close, and when those

awful judgments threatened in the prophets to be poured out upon wicked men in the last days, are just coming. Acts ii. 17; Heb. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 3; and the like. Compare Mat. xxiv. 29, 34; 1 Cor. x. 11.

<sup>d</sup> *For a day of slaughter*; α; iv. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. There are some who render this, as in a festival, when many sacrifices are slain. But Wolfius observes, that the word is always used in the Seventy to signify not a day of feasting, but of slaughter.

the just, and he doth not resist you.

self; [and] he doth not yet resist you\* with that display of power which he can easily exert to your utter destruction; but the day will speedily come, when God will avenge his cause, and pour out the judgment he has threatened, on those who have treated him in so base and unworthy a manner.

SECT.

VII.

James  
V. 6.

7 Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Since this is the case, since our Divine Master 7 has met with such injurious treatment, and borne it with such steady patience; *be ye therefore, my brethren, long-suffering and patient, even till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; [and] though it does not immediately appear, when sown, or ripen when it appears; yet he exerciseth patience with respect to it, till he receive the former rain, to produce it, and the latter, to bring it on to perfection.*

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

*Be ye also patient, and strengthen your hearts 8 in every good resolution; for the appearance of the Lord is near; he will quickly come, and reward all your long-suffering, and take vengeance on your implacable enemies, for all the outrages they have committed against you.*

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET the law of that one great Legislator, who is able both to save and to destroy, be always seriously remembered and considered; that we may not affront his authority in pretending to judge others, nor set up for judges, and in effect condemners of the law, by the severity of those censures which we pass upon our brethren. We are happy in knowing that sacred rule of life, if we obey it; otherwise, that knowledge of it which adds an aggravation even to sins of omission, will much more aggravate every presumptuous opposition to it.

Chap.  
iv. 12.

Let us look on this world as a scene of great uncertainty; and on life, as a flattering vapour, which vanishes while we are beholding it; and let a sense of its shortness and uncertainty, and of our own ignorance what shall be on the morrow, engage us to be very careful, that we do not presume upon the future, as

\* Not resist you.] Instead of you, Dr. Bentley would read *as for I resist you, the Lord; and would render it, and the Lord resists you; that is, you have brought the vengeance of his almighty arm upon*

you. Memoirs of Literat. Vol. VI. p. 173.—Others interpret it of the meet sufferings of the disciples of Christ, in conformity to the example of their Master.

SECT. VII. if it were in our own power; but set ourselves with all possible diligence to improve the present time, referring the disposal of all future events, to the wisdom of that God on whom it depends to determine whether we shall live, and do this or that.

Verse 15 Let rich men read the address of the apostle to persons in their circumstances, with holy awe, and with a jealousy over themselves, lest their present prosperity be succeeded with misery, and their joy with weeping and howling; as it undoubtedly will be, if wealth be unjustly gotten, or sordidly hoarded up, or luxuriously employed to pamper their appetites, while the truest and noblest use of it, the relief of the poor, and the benefit of mankind, is forgotten. Especially have they reason to tremble, who abuse wealth and power as the instruments of oppression; soon will all their stores be wasted, soon will they become naked and indigent, and find a terrible account remaining, when all the gaieties and pleasures of life are utterly vanished. In the mean time, the saints of God may be among the poor and the oppressed; but let them wait patiently for the day of the Lord, for his coming is near. They sow in tears, but let them comfort their hearts with the view of the harvest; in like manner as the husbandman demands not immediately the fruit of that seed he has committed to the furrows. Adored be that kind Providence which gives the former and the latter rain in its season. To him, from whom we have received the bounties of nature, let us humbly look for the blessings of grace, and trust him to fulfil all his promises, who without a promise to bind him, in particular instances, gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts xiv. 17.

## SECT. VIII.

*He concludes the epistle with inculcating moderation and fortitude, cautioning them against profane and vain swearing, and recommending prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation. James V. 9. to the end.*

JAMES V. 9.

AND now, to draw to a conclusion, be not inwardly incensed against each other, brethren, so as to grudge or envy one another any superior advantages in life, or to harbour even that malignity of disposition which should groan

JAMES V. 9.  
GRUDGE not one against another.

brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door.

in secret,<sup>a</sup> while it wants opportunities of mischief; *that you yourselves be not condemn'd, for behold the Judge is standing before the door*; he is now present, and sees all the irregularities of your tempers, as well as actions; in consequence of which, he will quickly bring these inward disorders of mind into judgment, as well as the enormities of the life. And that you may be fortified against such trying circumstances, *my brethren, take for an example of enduring adversity, and of long-suffering under the greatest provocations, the holy prophets of old, who spake to our fathers in the name of the Lord, and gave such convincing evidences of their Divine inspiration.* (Heb. xi. 36, 37.) *Behold, in this*

SECRET.  
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James  
V. 9.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

respect *we esteem them happy,*<sup>b</sup> *who endure steadily and patiently the trials which God appoints for them.* • In this view, *ye have heard of the celebrated patience of Job,* with how much honour it is proclaimed from generation to generation; *and ye have also seen the end of the Lord,*<sup>c</sup> how much to his honour, and how much to his comfort, his various and heavy afflictions concluded; *that the Lord is full of compassion, and of tender mercy;* and it is with the bowels of an affectionate Father, that he corrects his beloved children, not for his own gratification, but from a view to their advantage.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither

Among other effects of that impatience, against which I am cautioning you, may be reckoned the irreverent use of the name of God, and profane oaths and execrations, into which in the transport of their criminal passions, some unhappy wretches are ready to fall; *but be you above all things, my brethren, careful, that ye swear not, upon such occasions, or on any other, light-*

<sup>a</sup> Groan in secret.] Thus I have paraphrased the words, because it is well known, that the original *ἐν ἑσπέρῃ*, (as Beza observes,) has this signification. Justin Martyr represents the Jewish convert as the worst sort of Christians who were apt to be impatient of the Gentile yoke, and to retain their attachment to the views of a temporal kingdom.

<sup>b</sup> *We esteem them happy. &c.]* The apostle speaks of this, not only as his own

judgment, but that of all Christians who judged right, and understood the nature of things. And it is indeed a judgment in which all Christians should be agreed.

<sup>c</sup> *See the end of the Lord.]* It is observable that in Job xlii. 7, &c. God decides the cause in his favour, and calls him his servant Job four times in the compass of a few verses.



# 170 The sick to be healed by anointing, and the prayer of faith ;

SECT. ly and profanely,<sup>d</sup> *neither by heaven, the throne of God, nor by earth, his footstool, nor by any other oath ; but remember the command of our blessed Lord, (Mat. v. 37.) and let your yea be yea, and [your] nay nay ; content yourselves with a simple affirmation or negation, and take care to maintain such constant integrity in all your words, that nothing more may be needful to gain them credit ; that ye may not fall under condemnation for profaning the name of God, and lessening the regard due to an oath, when used on the most solemn and necessary occasions.*

VIII.  
James  
V. 12.

by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath ; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13 Accustom yourselves to the frequent exercises of devotion, as what will have the surest tendency to promote the comfort and happiness of your lives in every circumstance. *Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray, and cast the burden of his cares and sorrows upon the compassionate God, always ready to sustain his people. Is any cheerful, in easy and agreeable circumstances ? let him rejoice in God, and sing psalms of praise to him in a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.*

13 Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray. Is any merry ? let him sing psalms.

14 *Is any one among you sick ? let him, under his confinement, call for the elders of the church ; and let them pray over him for his recovery, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, if they feel themselves so instigated to do it by the secret workings of the Spirit of grace upon their minds, as may encourage them*

14 Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord :

15 to hope for an extraordinary cure : *And the prayer of faith,*<sup>e</sup> in such a circumstance as this,

15 And the prayer

<sup>d</sup> *Satan not.* ] This the Jews were very apt to do upon trifling occasions.

<sup>e</sup> *The prayer of faith.* ] I can by no means think, that this is advised merely physically. By the *prayer of faith* I understand, such a *faith* as is founded on some more than ordinary impression, by which God intimated an intension of working a miracle ; and I look upon it as a very considerable proof, that, as the power of working miracles was not absolutely confined to the apostles, so it might in some instances continue something longer in the church than their days. Lord Barringten indeed thinks, that the expression, *if he hath committed sin, &c.* refers to the

re-mission of such a sin as had engaged the apostle to deliver them to Satan, in order to corporal punishment. But I hardly think an *elder of the church* would then have been mentioned ; and one cannot imagine, that when the apostles were so few, and two of them comparatively so seldom together, the expression "*Sent for the elders of the church,*" should mean, *Send for some of the apostles.* How vastly different this is from the extreme unction, practised by the papists, not for cure, but only when life is despaired of, I think every reasonable man may easily judge.

of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

shall save and recover the sick; and the Lord shall, in answer to prayer, raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, which have brought this sickness upon him by way of extraordinary punishment, they shall be forgiven him; and the Lord shall have mercy upon him, and recover him according to the words of his servant.

SECT.  
VIII.  
James  
V. 13

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. *Confess [your] faults one to another*,<sup>f</sup> for we are all too ready to stumble in the way of our duty; and *pray for one another*, especially when your brethren are under God's afflicting hand, or have been under any visible declension in religion, *that you may be healed*, and recovered. *The earnest prayer of a righteous man*, the effect of good affections wrought in his heart *by the energy of the Holy Spirit*,<sup>g</sup> is of great efficacy. Many instances

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months

of this you know are recorded in scripture; and among others, that of *Elijah*, who was a man subject to the like infirmities with us, (compare Acts xiv. 15,) and had himself no greater command over the clouds and the rain than any of us; yet *he prayed with a prayer*, that is, with great faith and fervency, *that it might not rain*: which was not the effect of any resentment he had against his country for the ill usage he met with, but in obedience to a secret intimation that it was the will of God to glorify himself by sending upon them such a punishment for their idolatry; and the event, though so improbable, was correspondent to his prayer; for *it rained not upon the land for three years and six months*;<sup>h</sup> computing the time from the beginning of the

<sup>f</sup> *Confess [your] faults, &c.*] The general candid sense which I have given to the words, and which is a very important one, seems to me utterly to supersede all pretences to claim from them any priestly power, or to requiring confession in the manner which the church of Rome does. For the confession here mentioned is plainly spoken of as mutual.

<sup>g</sup> *It wrought—by the energy of the Spirit.*] The word *ενεργουμεν*, as Bishop Hopkins, (in his Works, p. 749,) observes, seems to

imply this sense. I have not confined it to the prayer of miraculous faith.

<sup>h</sup> *Three years and six months.*] *Elijah* is said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, &c. to have shewed himself to Ahab in the third year: that is, from his going to live at Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 8, 9, 14, but from the beginning to the end of the famine was three years and six months, according to the account given by St. James, as also in Luke iv. 25.

## 172 *He who converts a sinner shall save a soul from death.*

SECT. famine to the end of it. *And he prayed again,* 18 *And he prayed*  
VIII. at the end of that time, that God would be again, and the hea-  
James pleased to remove the heavy affliction which ven gave rain, and  
V. 18. the drought occasioned; and the small cloud the earth brought  
forth her fruit.

- 19 And now, *brethren*, let me conclude with one exhortation of the greatest importance both to yourselves and others; which is, that you labour to the utmost to promote the spiritual good of your fellow-creatures; for *if any one of you wander from the truth, and one turn him back* to it, and lead him to tread its forsaken paths, he performs the most important charity that can be imagined: For *let him know, that he who thus turneth back a sinner from the error* and fatal wanderings of *his way*, shall produce a much happier effect than any miraculous cure of the body; for he *shall save a precious soul from everlasting death*,<sup>i</sup> ruin, and condemnation, and so veil, or cover, a multitude of sins: not only procuring the pardon of those committed by the convert, but also engaging God to look with greater indulgence on his own character, and to be less ready severely to mark all he shall have done amiss.
- 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.
- 19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him:

### IMPROVEMENT.

MAY it ever be remembered by all, and especially by the ministers of the gospel, of how great importance it is to be instrumental in *saving a soul from death*, an immortal soul from *everlasting death*; that so they may be animated to the most zealous and laborious efforts for that blessed purpose; and think themselves richly rewarded, though it were for the otherwise unsuccessful labours of a whole life, by succeeding even in a single instance. In this view, may there be a care *to bring them to*

<sup>i</sup> *Save a soul from death, &c.*] This way of expression intimates in the strongest manner, the infinite importance of such an event; as to *save a soul from death* is yet more than *hiding the sins* of the convert. As to the latter clause, Bishop Atterbury, and Dr. Scott, urge the inter-

pretation given in the last words of the paraphrase. See Atterbury's Sermon. Vol. I. p. 46—48; Scott's Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 368. And I have not seen reason, on the most attentive inquiry, to disallow the force of their arguments. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 8, and the note there.

*the truth, that so they may be converted from their wandering ways, that their understanding being convinced of the truth and importance of the gospel, their conduct may be practically influenced by it; and that upon such steady principles, as may effectually prevent their return to their wanderings again. Thus may a multitude of sins be hidden, and the glory of God, and the salvation of men, be effectually promoted*

SECT.  
VIII.  
Verse  
20

Whatever trials we may meet with in these charitable efforts, or in any other part of duty, may we take the prophets of old, and the apostles of our Lord, for examples of suffering adversity and patience; especially remembering their Lord, and ours; remembering how abundantly the patience of good men has been rewarded, the end of the Lord with respect to holy Job, and many others, who have trod in his steps in succeeding ages; and remembering especially, that the Judge stands at the door, that in a very little time he will appear, not only to put an end to the trial of his servants, but to crown their virtues and graces. In the mean time, the bowels of his compassion are abundant, and he will not be wanting in communicating all necessary consolations and supports. May we be so happy, as to be acquainted with those of devotion, that in our affliction we may pray, and in our cheerfulness sing psalms; that we may know by blessed experience the efficacy of such a temper to soften the sorrows of life, and to sweeten its enjoyments. And as we desire to be visited of God in our afflictions, may we with Christian sympathy be ready to visit and relieve others in their sickness, or other kinds of distress. It is indeed the special office of the elders of the church, who should be sent for upon such occasions with readiness, and who, if they be worthy of their office, will attend with pleasure. But it is not their office alone. Let us be ready to pray for each other in faith and charity; and where offences have been committed, let there be a frank and candid acknowledgment of them on the one side, and as hearty a forgiveness on the other. In a word, let the efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous be often reflected on, to excite fervour, and to engage to righteousness, and to lead us to honour those who maintain such a character, and who offer such petitions and supplications; that God may, in answer to their requests, shower down his blessing upon us, that our land may yield its increase, that righteousness may spring up out of the earth, and that in every sense, God, as our own God, may bless us. (Psal. lxvii. 9; lxxxv. 11.)



THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR:**  
OR,  
A PARAPHRASE  
ON THE  
FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE  
OF THE  
**APOSTLE PETER.**  
WITH CRITICAL NOTES,  
AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE FIRST

## CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

**T**HE Apostle Peter makes a very eminent and illustrious figure on the theatre of the evangelical history, and was, on several occasions, favoured by our Lord with peculiar and distinguishing marks of honour. One instance, which I shall alone recite, among the many which might be recited, if it was needful, and which happened very soon after our Lord's ascension, is, that he was deemed worthy, under the impulse and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to open the gospel-dispensation, and first to preach salvation through a crucified Redeemer to the Jews, (Acts ii.) and Gentiles, (Acts x.) And I the rather suggest this instance, because it affords some colour to my own opinion that this epistle was written both to the Jewish and Gentile converts, who were dispersed in various regions of the world.

The sentiments of learned men upon this question—*To whom was this epistle written?*—are very various. The principal and most remarkable are these—That it was to the converted Jews of the dispersion—Or to the



converted Gentiles—Or lastly, (which is the opinion of Lord Barrington, embraced and defended by Dr. Benson) to the converted *proselytes of the gate*. It is not necessary in this place,\* to enter into a particular confutation of the last-mentioned hypothesis; especially as I apprehend what is suggested in my notes on several passages of the Acts, may convince an attentive reader, that there is no sufficient ground to suppose there were ever any such persons as *proselytes of the gate*. And as to the two former opinions, when the several arguments by which they are supported, are duly considered and examined, we shall perhaps be inclined to imagine that the apostle rather designed his epistle for the Jewish and Gentile converts *both*, than for either of them *distinctly and separately*. Without discussing the reasons for the opinion I have adopted, I shall leave the reader to form his own judgment, after he hath perused my paraphrase and notes on those passages of this epistle on which it is founded.

It is not very easy to assign the date of this epistle with exactness. The most commonly received opinion is, that it was written in the year 61, the seventh of the emperor Nero; and this seems to be a medium between the sentiments of those who place it some years higher, and those who place it lower, which bids fairest for the truth.

It is evidently the design of this epistle, “To induce the Christian converts, in various parts of the world, to maintain a conversation, not merely inoffensive to all men, but in all respects worthy of the gospel; and to support them under the severe persecutions, and fiery trials they already endured, or were likely to endure, by the noblest considerations which their religion could suggest.”

The first branch of this design the apostle seems to keep particularly in view from chap. i.—iii. 7. And in pursuance of it, after having congratulated his brethren, who were dispersed abroad through various countries, on their

\* The learned author intended, had Providence prolonged his valuable life, to have published a distinct dissertation on this subject. But this, and many other designs he had projected, for the benefit of the church and the world, were prevented by his justly-lamented death.

happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel, which was introduced into the world in so sublime a manner by the prophets and apostles, (chap. 1—12.) he exhorts them to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to universal obedience, by an affecting representation of their relation to God, their redemption by Christ's invaluable blood, and the excellence and perpetuity of the Christian dispensation, and of its glorious fruits and consequences, compared with the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, (ver. 13, to the end.) Urging them, by the like considerations, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as would adorn his gospel among the unconverted Gentiles, (chap. ii. 1—12.) For the same end, he exhorts them to the exercise of a due care as to relative duties: and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even when their dispositions and injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings, (ver. 13, to the end.) He likewise exhorts Christian wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornament of their minds rather than of their persons; and husbands to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable, (chap. iii. 1—7.)

In the ensuing part of the epistle, the apostle's arguments and exhortations more immediately and directly refer to those dreadful sufferings and persecutions to which the Christian converts were exposed, or which they actually endured, from the malevolence and rage of their implacable enemies. And here, well knowing that such treatment, unmerited and unprovoked, is apt to embitter and narrow men's spirits, and inflame their resentments; in which case the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus would be greatly dishonoured, and its spread and influence in the world retarded by the indiscreet behaviour of its friends and advocates; therefore

St. Peter urges many arguments on the Christian converts, in order to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life, and conversation; and to a steady, courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. (ver. 8—17.) And then animating them to endure their sufferings with patience and resignation, from the endearing consideration of what their Divine Saviour had suffered for them, he expatiates on his atonement, resurrection, and exaltation; on the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and on the awful solemnity of the last judgment, as powerful arguments to a life of mortification and holiness, whatever discouragement and opposition they might be called to encounter, (ver. 18.—iv. 6.) And as eminent vigilance, fidelity, and courage, would be requisite for rightly improving their talents and for discharging the duties of their respective stations in the church, at all times, but especially in times of imminent danger and persecution, he distinctly inculcates these several virtues; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes, that a tremendous, inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving. (ver. 7—19.) And at the close, he addresses some particular cautions both to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former, humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a steadfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this sublime consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a while, make them perfect, according to the apostle's earnest prayer for them; chap. v. throughout.

From this imperfect delineation of this admirable epistle, the production of another eminent apostle, it is no unnatural or improper remark, that all the principles of our holy religion, as here represented, are perfectly consistent with the analogy of faith, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament; that they are directly levelled against all manner of corrupt affections and immoral practices, as well as urged in the light of motives to all those virtues and graces, in which our

conformity to God, and the true glory of our nature consists. And (which, if it were the only circumstance that could be pleaded, would exalt our religion to an infinite superiority to the institutions of the most renowned heathen philosophers and lawgivers, and in connection with its amazing progress, is a demonstration of its Divine original,) Christians are here instructed to encounter outrageous violence and persecution only with the hallowed weapons of patience, meekness, and charity, and to silence the cavils, and blast the machinations of their own and their Master's bitterest enemies, with the lustre of a pure and holy life, and the fervour of a generous and invincible benevolence. How amiable, how elevated, how divine, how worthy of all acceptance is the religion of Jesus!—In delineating, as we have seen, the grand and essential branches of which, even Peter and Paul, notwithstanding all their contention about things of inferior moment, or of a personal and private nature, are perfectly consistent and harmonious.



## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

## FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF St. PETER.

## \* S E C T. I.

*The apostle Peter begins his address to his brethren who were dispersed abroad, with congratulating their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel; and takes occasion to expatiate upon the sublime manner in which it was introduced both by the prophets and the apostles.*  
 1 Pet. I. 1—12.

1 PETER I. 1.

**PETER**, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered

1 PETER I. 1.

**PETER**, who has the honour to be invested with the office of *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, inscribes and addresses this epistle to the elect strangers who are scattered abroad;<sup>a</sup> to those

SECT.

I.

1 Peter  
I. 1.

[<sup>a</sup> Scattered abroad.] Lord Barrington, (Miscel. Sacr. Essay II. p. 84—88,) strenuously maintains, that St. Peter wrote only to the converted *proselytes of the gate*; and in favour of this opinion he urgeth their being called *strangers*, which he thinks is the style *peculiar* to those who having renounced idolatry, and receiving the seven precepts of Noah, were yet

*strangers to the commonwealth of Israel.* He supposes they must have been Gentiles, because they are said, *once not to have been a people*, chap. ii. 9, 10, and to have been ignorant, verse 14, and to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, chap. iv. 3: and he also pleads, from chap. i. 22, where they are said to have purified their souls by obeying the truth, that

sect. 1. Christians whom Providence has dispersed <sup>throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,</sup> through various countries, and whom Divine grace

1 Peter  
I. 1.

has taught to consider themselves, wherever they dwell, as strangers and sojourners on earth; and particularly to those who inhabit the regions of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia*, and those in the 2 provinces of *Asia and Bithynia*. I call you [*elect*] because you are indeed chosen according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, who has projected all his schemes with the most consummate wisdom, and perfect discerning of every future event. He has been pleased, according to the steady purposes of his grace, to bring you by means of the *sanctification of the Spirit*, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost operating upon your souls, to evangelical obedience. He has subdued all your prejudices against the gospel, and effectually engaged you to submit to it; and thus you are interested in the pardon of sin, and in all the other blessings which proceed from the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, whereby forgiveness is obtained for us Christians as it was for the Jews under the law upon sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices; and may this, and every other instance and degree of *grace*, and all the *peace* consequent upon it, be multiplied unto you all, wherever you are, and whatever your condition and circumstances 3 in life may be. Whatever your afflictions are in this variable and troublesome world, I hope you never will forget, how indispensably you are obliged to thankfulness on account of

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the

it is likely they were *proselytes of the gate*, because a parallel expression is used by St. Peter concerning Cornelius and his friends, (Acts xv. 9. See Vol. III. § 53, note h.) whom he supposes to have been such. He likewise argues from their being addressed in these words, *If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work*, (chap. i. 17.) by St. Peter, who had himself addressed Cornelius in almost the same terms. (Acts x. 34, 35. See Vol. III. § 23, note c.) He pleads in support of the same opinion, their being called *Christians*, (chap. iv. 16.) a title which he supposes was first given to the converted *proselytes of the gate*, of which the

church at Antioch, where they were first called Christians, in his apprehension, consisted. (Acts xi. 26. See Vol. III. § 25, note c.) But all this appears to me to be utterly inconclusive; it is in part obviated already in my notes on the Acts; and as for the force which may seem to remain in his lordship's arguments, arising from the phrases in which St. Peter addresses those to whom he writes, it is, I think, entirely annihilated, by supposing that the epistle was written both to the converted Jews and Gentiles; of which the reader will be able to form a judgment by observing whether my paraphrase of the several passages in question be natural and easy.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you;

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if

<sup>b</sup> *Undefiled.*] That is, into which nothing that *polluteth* can enter. The land of Canaan was said to be defiled by sinners; to which perhaps there may be an allusion. Compare Rev. xxi. 27.

<sup>c</sup> *Are guarded, &c.*] The original word, *πεφυκεν*, is very emphatical, and properly signifies, *being kept as in an impregnable garrison*, secure from harm, under the observation of an *all-seeing eye*, and protection of an *almighty hand*. Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. I p. 196. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 32, in the Greek.

<sup>d</sup> *In the last time.*] This plainly refers to the second appearance of Christ, called *the last time*, because it will be the con-

cluding scene of all the Divine dispensations relating to this world. For the same reason, it is called *the last day*. John vi. 39; and xi. 24: And the design of the passage before us confirms this interpretation, since the apostle is here speaking of the full manifestation of the future happiness reserved in heaven for them. Some would connect, *in the last time*, with their being kept by the power of God; and understand it, as if the apostle had said, Though our lot is cast in the *last time*, when the temptations to apostasy are so great and powerful, we are, notwithstanding, preserved from all the dangers to which we are exposed.

your Christian privileges; and to such thankfulness let me now excite you and myself; blessed therefore [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath regenerated us to a great important and lively hope of future happiness, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; upon whom indeed, and upon whose resurrection, all our hopes depend. And by whom we are brought to the cheerful and confident expectation of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, which nothing can spoil, which nothing can pollute, and which is incapable of any internal decay, as well as external violence. This inheritance is reserved in the heavens for you, and for all true believers; Who, though now surrounded with many apparent dangers, are not left defenceless, but are guarded as in a strong and impregnable garrison, by the almighty power of God, through the continued exercise of that faith which this almighty power wrought in your hearts; and he will still maintain it unto that blessed hour when you shall receive the complete and eternal salvation which is already prepared, and though now kept as under a veil, is to be revealed in its full radiance of glory, in the last time<sup>d</sup>, the grand period, in which all the mysteries of Divine Providence shall beautifully terminate. This is the blessed state and condition to which by the gospel you are brought, in which, and in the glorious hopes which it inspires, you cannot but rejoice, though now for a little while, if

SECT.

1.

1 Peter  
I. 3.



SECRET. *it be necessary, you are grieved; and distressed* <sup>here be ye are in</sup> *amidst various trials. You know they are all* <sup>heaviness through</sup> *under the direction of the infinite wisdom of* <sup>manifold temptations:</sup>

1 Peter  
1. 6.

your heavenly Father, who would not subject you to them, did he not see them to be subservient to your truest happiness; and they will ere long be brought to an everlasting period.

7 His intention in all is most kind and gracious, namely, *that the little trial of your faith, which is far more precious and valuable than that of gold which perishes, and wears out in time, though it be tried by fire, and purified to the highest degree; may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, in the great day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Divine Author and Finisher of our faith, who having himself endured yet sorer trials, will rejoice to applaud and reward*

8 the fidelity of his servants in his cause: I say, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that glorious Redeemer, *whom not having seen* with your bodily eyes, nor personally conversed with him, *ye nevertheless love, and in whom, though now you see [him] not, yet assuredly believing, ye rejoice, as your almighty Saviour, Friend, and Protector, with unutterable and even glorified joy, with such a joy as seems to anticipate that*

9 of the saints in glory: *Receiving with unspeakable delight, as a full equivalent of all your trials, the great end of your faith, even the complete salvation of [your] souls; a prize of infinitely greater importance, than all you can*

10 be called to sacrifice for its sake! *Concerning which salvation, the prophets, who predicted the grace of the gospel, [which was appointed] to you, sought and diligently enquired; Searching with the deepest and most attentive reflection, to what period, or to what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did refer, when he testified long before they came*

7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified be-

\* *Not having seen.*] It is very possible that among these dispersed Christians, there might be some who had visited Jerusalem whilst Christ was there, and might have seen, or even conversed with him; but as the greater part had not, St. Peter speaks, according to the usual apostolic manner, as if they all had not. Thus he speaks of them all as loving Christ, though there

might be some among them who were destitute both of this Divine principle, and of that joy which he speaks of, as *ἀπολαύσαντες, αὐτὸν ἕως ἄνθρα*.

*Spirit of Christ which was in them. &c.*] It is well worthy our notice, that the Spirit which was dictated to the prophets, is called the Spirit of Christ; which (as Mr. Fleming observes, Christol. Vol. I. p. 135)

forehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

to pass, the various sufferings which were to come upon Christ, and the exalted and permanent glory which was to succeed them, and render him and his kingdom so perpetually illustrious, and his servants so completely happy. To the memorable testimony of these prophets it becomes us to pay a sincere and profound regard, to whom such extraordinary discoveries were made, as no attentive reader can view without conviction and astonishment: and it was revealed to them among other things, that [it was] not to themselves, but to us, that they ministered these things; they knew that we, when the events arose, should have a more complete understanding of these oracles, than any who declared them, had. Consider then, how happy you are in that dispensation under which you now live, when those Divine mysteries, which were only in a more obscure manner hinted at by the prophets, are most clearly and expressly declared to you, by those who have published the glad tidings of the gospel among you, by the evident authority and attestation, as well as by the assistances of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven with such visible glory, and testifying his continued residence amongst us by such wonderful effects. And indeed the doctrines which they preach, are things of so great excellence and importance, as to be well worthy the regard of angels, as well as men; and, accordingly, (as the images of the cherubin on the mercy-seat, seemed to bow down, to look upon the tables of the law laid up in the ark,) so those celestial spirits do, from their heavenly abode, desire to bend down, to [contemplate]

SECT.

I.

1 Pet.

1. 11.

both proves his existence before his incarnation, and illustrates the full view he himself had of all he was to do and suffer under the character of our Redeemer; the particulars of which therefore must have been comprehended in the stipulations between him and the Father. The apostle in discoursing so largely concerning the prophets, seems to have a special reference to the converted Jews, who would enter more thoroughly into this part of his reasoning than the converted Gentiles.

\* To whom it was revealed, &c. [I think

this text plainly proves, that the prophets had some general intimation, that their prophecies referred to the Messiah; but that they did not understand every clause of them in their full force, nor so well as we understand them, who are capable of comparing them with the event.

Angels desire to bend down, &c.] Thus it is in the original, ἐπιθυμοῦσιν κατακλισθῆναι, desire to stoop down to; in allusion no doubt, (as Mr. Saurin, Diss. Vol. II. p. 266. has beautifully illustrated it, and many others have remarked,) to the

SECT. I. such glorious displays of Divine wisdom and goodness, and attentively to survey those important scenes that are opening upon us here on earth; which is become so much more considerable than it would otherwise be, as it is honoured with being the theatre of such glorious events.

1 Pet.  
I. 12.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1 ARE we desirous of rendering it apparent to ourselves, and all around us, that we are indeed the elect of God? Let it be, by an humble application to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, on the one hand, and by the evident fruits of the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the other.

3 The abundant mercy of God, hath begotten real Christians to the lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for them: let us keep it steadily in view, and earnestly pray, that God would preserve us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Whilst we are waiting for this salvation, it is very possible, yea probable, affliction may be our portion; but let us remember, it is, if need be, that we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Our faith, and our other graces, are as it were thrown into the furnace, not to be consumed, but refined; that they may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ. Even at present, may this Divine faith produce that love to an unseen Jesus, which is here so naturally expressed by the apostle; and though now we see him not, yet may that love be eminently productive of joy, even that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory; and in the lively and vigorous exercise of these graces, may we all receive the end of our faith, even the everlasting salvation of our souls!

10 Let what we are here told of the prophetic writers be improved as it ought, to confirm our faith in that glorious gospel, of which these holy men have given in their writings such wonderful intimations and predictions; writings which we have such excellent advantages for more distinctly and clearly understanding, than even they themselves did. What exalted ideas should we entertain of a dispensation introduced by such a series of wonders, preached by the inspired prophets, and by the Holy Ghost in his miraculous gifts and salutary influence sent down from heaven; a dispensation into the glories of which the angels

bending posture in which they were represented on the mercy-seat. And Mr. Blackwall observes, (Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 491.) that it may denote, not only the attentive curiosity with which they

may inquire into the gospel, but the humility of their adoration, whereas it is very probable that their apostate brethren refused to stoop to such a scheme.

desire to pry; how much more worthy then, the attention of the children of men, who are so nearly concerned in it, who were redeemed from everlasting destruction, by the blood of the Son of God? O! let us review it with the closest application, and improve it to the infinitely gracious and important purposes for which it was intended. Then will grace and peace be multiplied to us; and however we may now be dispersed and afflicted, pilgrims and strangers, we shall ere long be brought to our everlasting home, and meet together in the presence of our dear and condescending Saviour; where having a more lively sense of our obligations to him, and beholding his glory, we shall love him infinitely better than at this distance we have been capable of, and feel our joy in him increased in a proportionable degree.

SECT.  
I.

Verse 2

## SECT. II.

*The apostle enforces his general exhortations to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to obedience, by an affecting representation of our relation to God, our redemption by the invaluable blood of Christ, the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, and the excellence and perpetuity of the gospel-dispensation. 1 Pet. I. 13, to the end.*

1 PETER I. 13.

**WHEREFORE,** gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 PETER I. 13.

**I HAVE** been endeavouring to give you some general ideas of the excellence and importance of the gospel-dispensation; reminding you of the wonderful manner in which it was introduced by the united labours of the prophets and apostles, and of the regard paid to it by the native inhabitants of the heavenly world. Regard it therefore as worthy the closest attention; and let the blessings of it be most vigorously pursued; and girding up the loins of your mind, that you may be capable of the most strenuous action, and being continually sober and temperate, and watchful against every thing that would ensnare and pollute you, hope unto the end for the grace and mercy which shall be brought unto you, in the great and glorious day of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Live in the view of his second appearance, and think every labour, and every self-denial, happily bestowed; which may subserve your prospect of felicity in that important day. You have now the honour to be adopted into the family of God;

SECT.  
II.

1 Peter  
I. 13.

SECT. conduct yourselves therefore as his obedient children, not fashion-  
 II. children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts which you indulged in the time of your ignorance, when you knew not this gospel, and were many of you in heathen darkness, and others under the imperfect dispensation of

1. Peter  
 I. 14.

15 Moses: *But as he that has called you to this glorious light, and participation of such invaluable blessings, is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in the whole of [your] conversation, in every thing you say and do, aspiring after this as your greatest honour, to bear the image of God in*

16 the moral perfections of his nature; *For it is written in several passages of the Mosaic scriptures, (Lev. xi. 44; xix. 2; xx. 7,) Be ye holy, for I am holy.* There is the same force in the argument now, respecting us Christians, which there was with regard to the Jews; yea greater force, in proportion to the degree in which the sanctity of the Divine Being is now more illus-

17 triously displayed; *And accordingly let me exhort you, if ye call upon the God and Father of all, who without respect of persons, or any kind of partiality, whether to Jews or Gentiles, judges every one according to [his] work, to converse during the time of your sojourning here, with all becoming reverence, and humility, in*

18 the religious fear of God; And so much the rather, *knowing the price of your redemption to have been so rich and invaluable. This is an important article of Divine knowledge, of which no Christian can be ignorant, that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold,\* which however regarded by men, have no value in the sight of God; this, I say, was not the price which bought you from your vain, trifling, and unprofitable conversation, received by tradition from your fathers,<sup>b</sup> from those hereditary superstitions, follies, and*

children, not fashion-  
 ing yourselves ac-  
 cording to the for-  
 mer lusts, in your  
 ignorance:

15 But as he which  
 hath called you is  
 holy, so be ye holy  
 in all manner of con-  
 versation;

16 Because it is  
 written, Be ye holy,  
 for I am holy.

17 And if ye call  
 on the Father, who  
 without respect of  
 persons judgeth ac-  
 cording to every  
 man's work, pass  
 the time of your so-  
 journing here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as  
 ye know that ye were  
 not redeemed with  
 corruptible things as  
 silver and gold, from  
 your vain conversa-  
 tion received by tra-  
 dition from your fa-  
 thers;

\* Redeemed with corruptible things, with silver and gold, &c.] Some think here is an allusion to the lamb, which made an atonement, and was bought at the common expense furnished by the contribution of the half-shekel, as an atonement for their souls. Compare Exod. xxx. 11, &c. As for those that think

here is a reference to the stamp of a *lamn* on the Jewish coin, I am neither sure of the truth of the fact, nor can I perceive the elegance of the supposed allusion. Compare Wells's Geog. of the Old Test. Vol. 1, p. 275.

<sup>b</sup> Received by tradition, &c.] Some think this refers to the Jewish traditions:

vices, which had in succeeding generations assumed the name and the garb of religion, and from the guilt which they had brought upon your souls. Ineffectual had all the treasures of the earth been to purchase help for us under so sad and deplorable a circumstance. But God was pleased to find out the

SECT.  
II.  
1 Petal  
I. 18.

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot:

only ransom, and has redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ, his Son, as of a lamb unblemished and unspotted, free from the least degree of moral pollution, and therefore properly represented by those lambs, free from all corporeal spots and blemishes, which the Jews were required to offer as an expiation for their souls. And as the paschal lamb was chosen, and 20

fore ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

set apart some time before it was sacrificed, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who was indeed typified by it, was known, approved, and fore-appointed from the foundation of the world, but made manifest in these latter times, by the clear preaching of the gospel, for your sakes, that ye might obtain redemption and salvation by him; Even 21 ye all who by him, and the manifestations of the Divine grace and mercy in him, are brought to repose your trust and confidence in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him such exalted glory and majesty in the celestial world; that so your faith and hope might be in God, and ye might be encouraged to commit all your concerns to him with cheerful confidence, when he has appointed you such a Saviour; and to expect all blessings from that friendship with him which is founded upon the incarnation, atonement, and blood of his own Son. Let it 22 be your care, therefore, that having purified your souls by an application to this fountain which God has opened, and by that obedience to the truth which will through the assistance of the Spirit be the result of such an application; and since the whole genius and design of this religion, which you have imbibed and professed,

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit

but perhaps it may express those vain rites of worship which for successive ages had been delivered down from parents to their children in the Gentile world.

Who by him trust in God. This phrase is remarkable, and I think with Mr. Hal-

I, p. 58.) that the meaning is, that Christians, who before their conversion were ignorant of the true God, learnt his Being and Providence from the great fact of Christ's resurrection, and the power with which God invested him on his ascension into heaven.

SECT.

11.

1 Peter  
1. 23

leads to an undissembled brotherly love; let it be your care, I say, to enter affectionately into its design and tendency: and to love one another out of a pure heart, operating fervently and intensely,<sup>d</sup> and not to rest merely in those deceitful forms and professions of affection, with which the men of the world amuse themselves and each other; or in those trifling instances of friendship which can do little to approve its

unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 reality and sincerity. The temper and conduct which I recommend, may justly be expected from you, considering your relation to God, and to each other; as *having been regenerated, not by corruptible seed, not by virtue of any descent from human parents, but by incorruptible*; not laying the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you had the honour to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not entitle you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is by means of the efficacy of the word of God upon your hearts, even that powerful word which *lives and endures for ever*,<sup>e</sup> that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 privileges. For as the prophet Isaiah testifies, (Isaiah xl. 6.) *all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass*, which is yet *frailer* than that; *the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth*; quickly deprived of its blooming honours, it drops, blasted and dying, to the ground. And thus precarious and uncertain are all the dependencies which we can have on perishing creatures;

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever in undiminished force and vigour, nor can ten thousand succeeding ages prevent or abate its efficacy. Now this, which the prophet refers to in the oracle I have just been quoting, is the word which is preached to you in the gospel: show therefore your regard to it by such a

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

<sup>d</sup> Intensely.] So I think the word *extreme*, properly signifies; according to the sense in which it is used by Polybius and Herodotus. See Raphaelus, Annot. in loc.

<sup>e</sup> The word of God, which lives and endures for ever.] This is rendered by some,

*Who lives and endures for ever*, referring it to God himself. But it is more agreeable to the design of the apostle, and (as Wolfius imagines to the order of the original words) to refer this clause to the word of God, which is here styled *incorruptible seed*.

temper and behaviour, both towards God and  
man, as it was intended to inculcate and pro-  
duce. sect.  
ii.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET it be matter of our daily delightful meditation, that while we clearly discern the uncertainty of all human dependencies, which wither like the grass, and fall like the flower of the field, the word of God is permanent and immutable. Let us cheerfully repose our souls on this stable, unfailing security; gratefully acknowledging the goodness of God, that he hath condescended to lay a foundation for our hope, so firm and durable as his own infallible word, and to make that word the incorruptible seed of our regeneration. If we have indeed experimentally known its efficacy and power, so that *our souls are purified by obeying the truth*, let us carefully express *our obedience to it, by undissembled, fervent brotherly love*; and animated by our glorious and exalted hopes as Christians, even that Divine and illustrious hope of the *grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, let us set ourselves to the vigorous discharge of every duty, as knowing that we should be children of obedience, having the excuse of ignorance no longer to plead for the indulgence of our lusts, but by a holy God being called with a holy calling, and instructed to invoke him, at once, as our gracious Father and impartial Judge.

It is worthy of our special remark, that the blessed apostle urges us to pass the transitory and limited time of our sojourning here in fear, from the consideration of our being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, which is a price of infinitely more value than all the treasures of the universe. And certainly there is a mighty energy in the argument; for as it is a very amiable, so it is also a very awful consideration. What heart so hardened, as not to tremble at trampling on the blood of the Son of God, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the important design of his death? Frustrating the design of a scheme, projected from eternity in the councils of heaven, and at length made manifest with every circumstance to convince our judgments, and engage our affections. And while we are reflecting on the resurrection and exaltation of our Redeemer, as the great foundation of our eternal hopes, let us dread to be found opposing him, whom God hath established on his own exalted throne; and with the utmost reverence let us kiss the Son, in token of our grateful acceptance of his mercy, and cheerful and humble submission to his authority. (Psal. ii. 12.)



## S E C T. III.

*The apostle urges them, by a representation of their Christian privileges, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ, as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as might adorn his gospel, among the unconverted Gentiles.*  
1 Pet. II. 1—12.

## I PETER II. 1.

SECT.

III.

1 Peter  
II. 1.

**I** HAVE been reminding you of the everlasting permanency and invariable certainty of the word of God ; let this, therefore, engage you to pay it a becoming regard ; and *laying aside all malignity, and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings*, which are so contrary to its benevolent design, With all simplicity, *as new-born infants*,<sup>a</sup> who are regenerated by Divine grace, *desire that spiritual nourishment, that rational and unmingled milk*, if I may so call it ; *that so ye may grow thereby*, to *a state of adult Christianity*. And this may reasonably be expected of you, *since you have so experimentally felt and tasted that the Lord [is] gracious*,<sup>b</sup> since you have known the sweetness there is in Christ, and how suitable he is to the necessities and desires of an awakened sinner ;  
4 *To whom coming, [as to] a living stone*, who is capable of diffusing spiritual life into those who are united to him, though *disallowed indeed and rejected of men, yet chosen of God, [and] inexpressibly precious* and valuable ; *Ye also as living stones*, united to him, and deriving life from him, *are built up as a spiritual house, consecrated to his service* ; and in another view, ye may be considered as *a holy priesthood*, destined to offer up the *spiritual sacrifices* of prayer, praise, and obedience, which are all *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, who is the great High Priest over the house of God, whose intercession alone

## I PETER II. 1.

**W**HEREFORE, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings,

2 As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby ;

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

<sup>a</sup> *New-born infants.*] This expression very emphatically denotes those who are newly converted or regenerated.—Wolffas observes, (Cura Philol. Vol. V. p. 105,) that the Jewish rabbies were wont to style new proselytes to their religion,

*little children and new-born babes.*

<sup>b</sup> *Since you have tasted, &c.*] This is the proper rendering of *utiq*, and not according to our translation, *if so be*. See Blackwall's Sacred Class. Vol. II. p. 203.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded:

7 Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner:

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a

can recommend to the Father such imperfect services as ours.

Therefore it is contained in a well-known passage of the scripture, (Isaiah xxviii. 16,) *Behold I lay in Zion a stone, even a chief corner-stone, chosen, precious, and he that confideth in it, shall not be ashamed:* which words undoubtedly refer to the Messiah, as the great hope and confidence of his church. To you therefore who believe, [it is] precious: you, who rest your salvation on this corner-stone, know by blessed experience its value, as infinitely beyond all that can be compared with it.

But as for those who are disobedient, these words of the Psalmist are accomplished with regard to them, and may well be recollected in the present connection, (Psalm cxviii. 22,) *The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner:* all their opposition to it is in vain: they can never pretend to prevent the honour to which it is destined in the Divine purpose;

And to themselves, it is also, as Isaiah expresses it in the preceding context, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;* they who would attempt, as it were, to remove it out of the way, find it an over-match for their strength, and are dashed in pieces by it. They being disobedient to the Divine revelation, *stumble at the word* of the gospel, which contains this awful testimony, and bring inevitable ruin upon themselves; to which also they were appointed by the righteous sentence of God long before, even as early as in his first purpose and decree he ordained his Son to be the great Foundation of his church.

But you, on the contrary, who unfeignedly believe in him, [are] a chosen generation, a royal

<sup>c</sup> It is precious.] τιμήν, Preciousness itself.

<sup>d</sup> They being disobedient, stumble, &c.] A learned writer, I think, very well observes that it is doing violence to the text, to read it as one continued sentence, as it is in our translation. The truth is, the apostle runs a double antithesis between believers and unbelievers: εἰς αὐτοὺς—πιστεύουσιν, saith he, To you who believe, it is precious: ἀπειθήσαντες δὲ, but to them who are disobedient, and unbelievers, a stone of stumbling: οἱ ἀπειθήσαντες, they stumble: εἰς αὐτοὺς

δὲ, but you are a chosen people, &c. See

Taylor's Key to the Romans, § 71.

<sup>e</sup> Ye are a chosen generation.] Dr. Whitby shews at large that the phrase of God's chosen is applied to the whole nation of the Jews, good and bad, and not to those among them who might be supposed elected to eternal life. But it seems very unreasonable to limit such phrases as these when applied to Christians just to the idea, which the like phrases had, when applied to the Jews.

sect.

III.

1 Peter II. 6.

SECT. III. *priesthood*, who bear at once the dignity of *royal priesthood*, as kings, and sanctity of priests: *a holy nation*, set apart in a special manner for the service of God; and *a peculiar people*. When these titles were given to Israel of old, it was in an inferior sense; and it is in a much nobler signification, that these words may be applied to you. Consider it therefore as the wise intention of Divine Providence, *that you should declare and proclaim all abroad, the virtues<sup>f</sup> of him who has called you out of that darkness*, in which you originally were, *into his marvellous and glorious light*; <sup>g</sup> that clear light of the gospel, which opens so many illustrious scenes of Divine wonders.

10 *To this, are you, my brethren, called, who once [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God;*<sup>h</sup> *who had not obtained mercy*; who, many of you, lay in the ruins of the Gentile world, *but have now obtained mercy*, and are gathered into the church of God, and by his

11 *favour entitled to all its privileges.* My beloved brethren, let it be your special care to walk worthy of these privileges; and that you may, *I beseech [you] as strangers in this world, and sojourners in the body*, who are to be here but for a very little space of time, and must soon quit this state of mortality to dwell in another world, *that ye abstain from carnal lusts*, in the gratification of which only a very mean and transient pleasure is to be found: for these are appetites which are suited only to that part of our nature, which so soon is to be laid down, and *which do indeed make war against the nobler powers of the immortal soul*, and have a tendency, not only to injure, but for ever to

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

<sup>f</sup> *The virtues.* We render it *praises*; but the word *ἀρεταί*, is well known commonly to have the signification here assigned it.

<sup>g</sup> *Marvellous and glorious light.* A most beautiful expression of the wonders the gospel opens on the enlightened eye. But perhaps no interpretation was ever more unnatural and servile to an hypothesis than that which the author of *Miscellanea Sacra* gives to these words, when he explains their being *called out of darkness*, by their being first made *prophets* of

*the gate*, from their state of heathen idolatry, and then being brought into the *marvellous light* of the Christian religion. *Miscell. Sacra*, Vol. II. p. 85.

<sup>h</sup> *Here not a people.* I think it plain that Hosea ii. 23, (to which there seems here to be a reference,) relates to the Israelites after their rejection. But it may with so much propriety be accommodated to the Gentiles, that I thought it much better to give it such a turn, than to suppose it here spoken only of Jewish converts.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

ruin it, if they are suffered to prevail and govern; *Having your conversation honest, fair, and honourable among the Gentiles*, particularly in an exemplary discharge of all social and relative duties; *that whereas they speak against you, as evil doers*, in separating from the worship of their gods, and joining yourselves with what they presumptuously call the impious sect of Christians, *they being eye-witnesses continually of [your] good works*, may not only lay aside these blasphemous reproaches, but exchange them for commendations and praises; and so *may glorify God in the day of [their] visitation*, during the season in which the gospel is preached among them, whereby they are visited with the offers of pardon and salvation.

SECT.

III.

1 Pet. II. 12.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET us examine our own hearts seriously and impartially, with respect to those branches of the Christian temper, and those views of the Christian life, which are exhibited in this excellent portion of holy writ. Let us, especially, enquire, in what manner, and to what purposes we receive the word of God. Is it with the simplicity of babes, or children? do we desire it, as they desire the breast? do we lay aside those evil affections of mind, which would incapacitate us for receiving it in a becoming manner? And does it conduce to our spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace? have we indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious? do we experimentally know, that to the true believer the Redeemer is inestimably precious? have we indeed come to him, as to a living stone; and notwithstanding all the neglect and contempt with which he may be treated by many infatuated and miserable men, by wretches who are bent on their own destruction, do we regard, and build on him as our great and only foundation? and do we feel that spiritual life diffused through our souls which is the genuine consequence of a real and vital union with him?—If these be our happy circumstances, we shall never be ashamed or confounded: for this is that *foundation*, which God hath laid in Zion; and the united efforts of earth and hell to raise or overturn it, will be scattered as chaff and stubble, and by the breath of God be rendered utterly vain and ineffectual.

Are we conscious of our high dignity, as we are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*? are our hearts suitably affected with a sense of the Divine goodness, in calling us to be a *people*, who once were *not a people*; and us *beloved*, who were *not beloved*; in leading us from the deplorable

9, 10.

sect. *darkness of ignorance and vice, in which our ancestors were in-*  
 III. *involved, into the marvellous light of his gospel; yea, in dissi-*  
*pating those thick clouds of prejudice and error, which once*  
*vailed this sacred light from our eyes; that its enlivening beams*  
*might break in upon our souls? And are we now shewing forth*  
 Verse *his praises? are we now offering to him spiritual sacrifices, in*  
*humble dependence on Christ, our great High Priest, who con-*  
*tinually intercedes for our acceptance with God? Then shall we*  
*indeed make our calling and our election sure, and shall ere*  
*long appear in his heavenly temple, both as kings and priests*  
*unto God, to participate of our Redeemer's glory, to reign with*  
*him, and minister to him for ever.*

Let us be careful, in the mean time, to remember, that we are strangers and sojourners on earth, as all our fathers were; and that our days in this transitory life are but as a shadow that declineth; and let us learn to regard the appetites of our animal nature, and the interests of this mortal life, with a noble superiority, reflecting, for how little a space of time they will solicit our attention. And as for fleshly lusts, let us consider them as making war against the soul; arming ourselves with that resolution and fortitude which is necessary to prevent their gaining a victory over us; which would be at once our disgrace, and our ruin. There is an additional argument to be derived, for a strenuous opposition to them, from our circumstances and situa-  
 12 *tion in the present world; where there are so many enemies to our holy religion, who cannot be more effectually silenced than by our good conversation. Let it be, therefore, our principal care to cut off from them the occasion of speaking against us as evil doers; and by exhibiting a clear and unexceptionable pattern of good works in our daily conversation, let us invite and allure them to improve the day of their visitation, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.*

#### SECT. IV.

*In order to adorn the gospel, the apostle urges upon them the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even where their dispositions or injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings.*  
 1 Pet. II. 13, to the end.

1 PETER II. 13.

**HAVING** been already urging you to set a  
 good example before those that are with-

1 PETER II. 13.

**SUBMIT** your-

selves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme;

out; for the further illustration of that general precept, let me exhort you to be particularly careful to be subject to every human constitution of government, under which you are providentially placed, for the Lord's sake, and that ye may not bring any reflection upon the religion of Jesus; whether it be to the king or emperor, as

sect. 14.  
1 Peter II. 13.

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

supreme; Or whether it be to governors, and 14 presidents, as sent and commissioned by him from Rome, in order to the punishment of evil-doers,<sup>b</sup> but to the praise of them who do well: for this is indeed the true intent of magistracy, and this will be the care of them who rightly understand the nature and honour of their office.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

For so is the will of God in this respect, that by 15 doing good ye should bridle in the ignorance of foolish men,<sup>c</sup> which might be ready to cast reflections upon you. As those who are indeed 16

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

in the noblest sense free, in consequence of your relation to Christ, and your share in the purchase of his blood, yet not using [your] liberty as a veil and covering for the practice of wickedness, as the Jews too often do; but behaving continually as becomes the servants of God, as those who are now more than ever his property, in consequence of your having been bought with such a

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God.

price. Honour all men; maintain an esteem 17 for human nature in general, and observe with pleasure whatever is truly honourable in the meanest and most undeserving of mankind. Love the Christian brotherhood with a peculiar and distinguishing affection, suitable to that fraternal relation into which you are brought by your joint adoption into the family of God, and insertion into the body of Christ. Reverence God<sup>d</sup> at all

\* [Every human constitution.] The whole course of the apostle's reasoning in this place so plainly shews how very impertinent it is to apply this to the injunctions of men in matters of religion, that one cannot but wonder that any rational writer should ever have mentioned the argument which has been drawn from it.

<sup>b</sup> [In order to the punishment of evil-doers.] The Roman governors had the power of life and death in such conquered provinces as those mentioned, chap. i. 1. There is, therefore, the exactest propriety in the

style, as Dr. Lardner hath observed, Critic. Vol. I. p. 167.

<sup>c</sup> [The ignorance of foolish men.] By the foolish men here spoken of, Dr. Whitby understands the heathens, who might be ready foolishly to judge of Christians by the behaviour of the turbulent Jews, and so might represent them as a people naturally averse from subjection to kings; as Josephus says of his own nation.

<sup>d</sup> [Reverence God, &c.] Perhaps no finer and stronger instances of the Lacedæmonian style, are to be found any where than

SECT. times with the sincerest and profoundest humility. Honour the king.

IV. lity; and let a sense of the honour and favour he has conferred upon you increase, rather than diminish that reverence. *Honour the king* whom

1. Peter  
II. 17.

God hath set over you, and all the subordinate governors who derive their authority from him; paying obedience to all their just commands, and taking heed that there be nothing rebellious or factious in your behaviour, which would turn to the hurt of society, and bring a reflection upon

18 your holy profession. *Ye who are domestic servants and slaves, be in subjection to [your own] masters in all things lawful, with all reverence and submission; and remember to pay this regard not only to the good and the gentle, whose moderation, clemency, and benevolence make your yoke easy; but also to the froward and per-*

19 verse. *For this [is] graceful indeed, and deserves applause, if any one for the sake of conscience towards God, and a desire of performing his duty to him, patiently endures grief and sor-*

20 row, *though he suffer unjustly: For after all what glory [is it,] or what can you possibly value yourselves upon, if when ye have committed an offence, and are buffeted and corrected for it, ye endure [it?]* How can you indeed do otherwise? or if you could, how shameful were it in such a case, to rise against the hand of your injured masters? *But if, when you have done good, and yet suffer through the tyranny and perverseness, ye endure [it] meekly and patiently, this [is] acceptable and graceful before God;*<sup>e</sup> his eye, which always judges of the true beauty of characters aright, is even delighted with such a spectacle, though exhibited in the lowest rank

21 of human life. And I would particularly urge this meek and patient temper upon you; *for to this you were called, when you were brought into the profession of the Christian faith; because Christ himself,*<sup>f</sup> pure and spotless as he was,

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this is thank worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also.

in this place. It is remarkable that they are required to honour the emperor, though not a persecutor, and of an abandoned character, as Nero himself.

<sup>e</sup> *If when ye have done good, and yet suffer, ye endure [it] this [is] graceful before God.* The emperor Antoninus quotes

it as an excellent saying of Antisthenes, that it is truly royal to do good, and to be reproached. Ant. Med. L. vii. § 36.

<sup>f</sup> *Because Christ himself, &c.]* It is observable, that upon the mention of the name of Christ, the apostle falls into a noble and animated digression of several

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

suffered not only buffetings and stripes, but deep and mortal wounds, for you, leaving you an example and copy, that you might with certainty trace, and with constancy and diligence follow his footsteps, and by observing them as his, be charmed to an imitation, even where it was most difficult and painful. We cannot expect in-

sect.

iv.

1 Petit

II. 21.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

deed to arrive at a perfect resemblance of it; but let us endeavour to approach as near as possible, even to the amiable character of him who did no sin, neither was any degree of deceit found in his mouth; Who being reviled, reviled not again, and suffering the most grievous insults and injuries, threatened not the vengeance which he had it in his power to have executed; but committed [himself] to him who judgeth righteously, and who in his own most proper time will make the righteous and innocent triumphant over all their enemies. Yet we know

23 Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

this spotless and Holy Person was as much distinguished by the grievousness of his sufferings, as by the integrity of his character. For it is He, who himself bore the punishment of our sins in his own body, when he hung in the agonies of crucifixion on the accursed tree; that we being freed from the guilt of our sins,<sup>a</sup> and the misery to which they exposed us, might live unto righteousness: by whose stripes and bruises ye are healed<sup>b</sup> of evils infinitely greater than the cruelty of the severest masters can bring upon you; according to the well-known phrase of the prophet, (Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6.) For ye were like

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray:

sheep going astray, exposed to want and danger, and wandering in the way to destruction; but now ye are by Divine grace, recovered and

verses, to the end of the chapter; afterwards he continues to pursue his exhortation to relative duties.

<sup>a</sup> Suffered for you, leaving you. &c.] I here prefer the reading of the Alexandrian, and other MSS. as most agreeable to the sense and connection.

<sup>b</sup> That being freed from sin, τὰς ἀμαρτίας, ἀπολύμενοι.] That our common translation is agreeable to the frequent signification of the original word, is certain. But so is the version I have chosen, which is approved by Beza, and is

preferred and adopted by that judicious and learned critic Erasmus Schmidius.

<sup>c</sup> By whose stripes, &c.] Mr Cradock supposes the meaning of this is, as if he had said, The blood of Christ, by which your souls are saved, may be a sufficient balm for those wounds and bruises which your cruel masters may inflict upon you; that is, it may so delight your minds as to raise you above any undue regard to, and concern about such corporal sufferings. Apost. ii. t. p. 107.



SECT. turned again to him who bears the important <sup>but are now returned</sup>  
 IV. and tender character of *the great Shepherd and* <sup>unto the Shepherd</sup>  
*Bishop of your souls,*<sup>k</sup> who has graciously re- <sup>and Bishop of your</sup>  
 I Peter ceived you under his pastoral care, and will <sup>souls.</sup>  
 11. 25. maintain that inspection over you which shall  
 be your continued security from returning to  
 those fatal wanderings; and the sense of this  
 may cheer and comfort you under any oppres-  
 sion or injuries to which you may be exposed.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse As the honour of God is eminently concerned in the regard  
 13, 18 shewn by his people to the relative duties, let us out of a due re-  
 spect to that, pay a very careful and diligent attention to them;  
 15 that the ignorance of foolish men, of those who reproach our good  
 13, 14 conversation in Christ, may be utterly silenced. Let magistrates  
 especially be revered, and in all things lawful, obeyed. And  
 if they desire to secure reverence to their persons and authority,  
 let them remember the end and design of their office, namely, *to*  
*be a terror to evil doers, and a praise* and encouragement to the  
*regular and virtuous.* And let us, who rejoice in our liberty,  
*that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,* be very careful  
 16 that it be not *abused as a cloke of licentiousness*; but as we would  
 17 manifest our fear and reverence of God, let us remember to ho-  
 nour the king; yea, to render to every man, and every station  
 and character, the esteem and respect which he justly claims;  
 feeling at the same time, the constraints of a peculiar affection  
 to all those who are united to us, by the endearing character of  
 our brethren in the Lord.—Should men who fill superior stations  
 and relations in life, not be so regular, and without exception, in  
 18 their private and public deportment as they ought, let us per-  
 form our duty, not only to the gentle and obliging, but to the  
 21 perverse and froward; remembering our Lord's example, which  
 24 was set before us, that we might follow his steps. And let his  
 marvellous love in bearing our sins in his own sacred body on  
 the tree, endear both his example and his precepts to our souls,  
 and constrain us to a holy conformity to him.

Since he who is the great *Shepherd and Bishop of souls*, came  
 on the most gracious and condescending errand of *seeking and*  
 23 *saving that which was lost, of gathering us into his fold*, who were  
 wandering in the way to perdition; let us shew so much grati-  
 tude and wisdom, as not to wander any more; but as we regard

<sup>k</sup> *Bishop of your souls.*] This is an in-  
 stance of that duplicity of design which is  
 often to be found in the epistles. The  
 apostle urges these things peculiarly upon  
 servants: yet does it in general language,  
 as well knowing that many of them were  
 the concerns of all Christian readers.

our security and our very life, let us keep our Shepherd in our eye, submit ourselves to his pastoral inspection, and cheerfully follow him, in whatsoever path he shall condescend to conduct us.

SECT.

IV.

SECT. V.

*Christian wives are exhorted to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds, rather than of their persons; and likewise husbands are exhorted to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. 1 Pet. III. 1—7.*

1 PETER III. 1.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives,

1 PETER III. 1.

I HAVE been discoursing of the duty of a servant; let me now likewise consider those of some other relations; and particularly urge it upon you, O ye Christian wives, that ye [be] in subjection to your own husbands, in all things just and lawful; that if any of them be disobedient to the word of the gospel, and have refused to yield to all the other mighty arguments by which Christianity is supported, they may without attending upon the word, be gained over, to the love and practice of it, by the amiable and edifying deportment of [their] wives : Particularly beholding your chaste and spotless conversation, in the fear of God, and with a due reverence to your husbands, for his sake, and not merely on constraint. Be careful to behave in every respect as becomes those whose happiness it is to be acquainted with the great principles of Christianity; and particularly consider, how they should influence your conduct in the adorning of your persons.<sup>a</sup> And as to this, let it not be merely external,<sup>b</sup> nor consist in the plaiting and braiding the hair, or in

SECT.

V.

1 Peter

III. 1

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear:

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and

<sup>a</sup> [Whose adorning, &c.] Plutarch quotes a passage from Crates, in which he observes, in words greatly resembling these, "That neither gold, nor emeralds, nor pearls, give grace and ornament to a woman; but all those things, which clearly express, and set off her gravity, regularity, and modesty." Precept Cong. p. 86. But St. Peter's precept is enriched with a variety of much more

noble and agreeable thoughts; especially when recommending virtue as the ornament of the hidden man, incorruptible, and precious in the sight of God, the truest judge of beauty and perfection.

<sup>b</sup> [Let it not be, &c.] This is not to be interpreted as absolutely prohibiting the ornaments of dress, but only the making these things our chief concern. Compare John vi. 27; with 1 Tim. v. 8.

SECT.

V.

1. Peter  
III. 4.

*putting on chains of gold about the neck, or ear-rings, or bracelets of gold on the arms, or in wearing of sumptuous and splendid apparel:*

But let your ornament be of a much more glorious nature let it consist in a well-regulated temper of mind, in having *the hidden man of the heart* rightly formed: let it be seated in *what is more incorruptible* by far than gold, or gems, which, stable as they are, may in time wear away, and are liable to a variety of accidents; I mean, in the beautiful and harmonious disposition of *a meek and quiet spirit*, silently submitting to the conduct of your husbands, and gently accommodating yourselves to them as far as reasonably you can; *which* argues an inward wisdom and goodness, that is *highly precious in the sight of God* himself; who looks with comparative contempt on those little artifices by which the notice of vain men is often attracted. This has long been the prevailing fashion in God's family; *for so the holy women also, who hoped in God*, and served him in the integrity of their hearts, *long since, adorned themselves, being, agreeably to the exhortations* I have been giving you, *in subjection to their own husbands:* As you may particularly recollect in the instance of *Sarah*, who you know *obeyed Abraham* her husband, *calling him* constantly, when she spoke of him, her *lord*, though she was not only of the same family with him, but was herself in so peculiar a manner dignified by God, and had her name changed in token of her being a mother of many nations, and of the veneration in which she was to be held in all succeeding ages. Remember therefore the character of this excellent woman, whom those of you, who are of Jewish extraction, are so fond of calling your mother; and *whose daughters you indeed are, so long as ye do well*, and preserving, by such a conduct, your inward tranquillity and fortitude, *are not meanly terrified*, so as to act out of character, *with any amazement,*<sup>c</sup> or dan-

of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, ~~in~~ which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands;

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye well, and are afraid with any amazement.

<sup>c</sup> Not terrified with any amazement.] Many have apprehended this last clause is suggested as an argument to persuade them to do well, that they would be preserved

from those alarms and terrors which a perverse and rebellious contest with superior power might bring along with it, and which would indeed prove as injuri-

SECT.

V.

1 Peter

III. 6

7 Likewise, ye dwell with according to knowledge, giving honour unto the *weaker vessel* and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

ger, which may meet you in the way of your duty. The want of a becoming and necessary fortitude in this case, would indeed be attended with fatal consequences, and render you unworthy of so honourable a title. And that the duty of the wife may be rendered more easy and agreeable, and ye husbands may have more reason to expect it to be cheerfully performed, let it be your care likewise that ye dwell with [your wives] according to knowledge, and in such a manner as becomes those who have been instructed in that great system of wisdom and duty, the gospel of Christ. And particularly be careful so to order your affairs, that you may not be prevented from allotting an honourable and comfortable subsistence to the woman; for this is a piece of respect which is due to the tenderness and infirmity of her sex, as being upon the whole the weaker vessel, less able to endure the fatigue of labour, and subject to various indispositions which peculiarly require succour and accommodation. See therefore that this duty be properly and carefully performed, that your hearts may be endeared to each other; and upon the whole, converse together, as [those who are] joint heirs of the grace of eternal life, and are solicitous, that your behaviour may be correspondent to so exalted a hope, and may be so ordered in every respect, that your joint prayers may not be hindered, nor the pleasures of devotion impaired

ous to their peace as to their character. But the structure of the Greek sentence makes it evident, that he speaks of the *condition* on which they were to preserve the characters of daughters of Sarah. Possibly the apostle might have in his mind the instance in which Sarah acted beneath her usual character, when through fear and sudden amazement she denied her having lain with Gen. xviii. 15. And if he had, it is the design of this sentence to intimate, that though in that instance she failed, she generally acted in a very different manner: but as the hint is very oblique, I choose not to express it very strongly in the paraphrase, though I have indeed glanced upon it. [Allotting an honourable subsistence to the woman.] The reader may see a very different, and truly I think, a very unjust interpretation of these words in

Dr. Whitby; which I shall not so much as transcribe.—It is to be remembered, that many of the Christians were persons of low rank in life; which might make such a precept of maintaining their wives decently, and not subjecting them to harder labour than they could bear, (which they might be tempted to do from their indigent circumstances) exceeding proper. The sense of the word *trian*, (as signifying subsistence or maintenance,) is so much confirmed by 1 Tim. v. 17, that I think I need say no more to elucidate it.

[That your prayers may not be hindered.] These words seem strongly to intimate the great importance of social prayer; as, when we shortly expect to unite in acts of domestic devotion, a concern not to be not only united for it, will be a guard upon our general behaviour.

SECT. by any secret alienation of heart, but rather  
 V. be increased by the strictest union and sincerest  
 affection.

## IMPROVEMENT.

LET us observe with a pleasing attention, how greatly  
 tons all the apostles are, not only to establish the doctrines of  
 Christianity, but to inculcate its precepts; particularly those,  
 which refer to the relative duties of life. The comprehensive  
 argument by which St. Peter enforces those of one peculiar re-  
 Ver. 1. lation, may be considered as also enforcing all the rest; I mean,  
 the tendency of our exemplary behaviour, *to win over those who  
 are without the word, or are disobedient to it.* In this manner  
 let us all plead the cause of our Lord and Master. And this si-  
 2 lent, this winning eloquence will, by the Divine blessing, be  
 powerful and effectual.—The vail of modesty is decent in all,  
 and an humble caution, and fear of offending, are to be con-  
 sidered as duties of universal obligation. But if the weaker sex  
 3, 4 are commanded to aim at a noble superiority to the concerns of  
 this animal life, and to the parade and vanity of dress, it may  
 with greater reason be expected from men who boast of their  
 superior understanding and larger experience. They, not only  
 from Christian humility, but, one would think, even from a  
 manly pride, should be raised above such childish ornaments,  
 in contriving and adjusting which, many who are stiled rational  
 creatures, spend much too large a portion of their precious time,  
 and for the sake of which they neglect the cultivation and em-  
 bellishment of their intelligent and immortal part, and the secur-  
 ing an happiness that will never have an end: as if glittering in  
 the eyes of our fellow-worms were so desirable a thing, that it  
 4 were worth while, for the sake of it, to expose ourselves to con-  
 demnation from God! Let the hidden man of the heart be more  
 our care; and when that is rightly governed, the proper conduct  
 of our external behaviour will be natural and easy.  
 7 Let us labour to walk according to knowledge, to behave as  
 those who have been well instructed in the science of the gos-  
 pel, in comparison of which all other sciences are ignorance  
 and vanity. Let us be ready to make allowance for the natural  
 infirmities of those about us. Especially, let husbands consider  
 those of their wives, (not as an encouragement to oppression,  
 than which nothing could be more ungenerous, but) as an en-  
 gagement in all honour and conscience, to a tender and respect-  
 ful behaviour. How becoming and amiable is such a conduct  
 in those who through Divine grace are heirs of eternal life! And  
 if a due care be not maintained on this head, there will be an in-  
 disposition for social and for secret prayer; and when the plea-

asures of devotion are destroyed or embittered, it is not to be expected any other kind of pleasure, worth the regard of a rational creature, can long continue. SECT. VI.

## S E C T. VI.

*The apostle urges various arguments on the Christian converts, to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life and conversation, and to a steady courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition.* 1 Pet. III. 8.—17.

1 PETER III. 8.

**F**INALLY, be ye all of one mind, having compassion, one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over

1 PETER III. 8.

**T**O conclude this head; my brethren [be] all unanimous, guarding against all unnecessary occasion of contention; be sympathising, full of brotherly love to all Christians, compassionate to those that are in distress, and friendly to all those that need your assistance. *Not returning evil for evil, nor reproach for reproach; but on the contrary, rather blessing, even to those that curse you, according to our Lord's precept; knowing that to this purpose ye were called to the profession of Christianity, that ye might inherit a blessing* immense and eternal; the expectation of which, (considering its infinite importance,) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill-usage you may meet with from your fellow-men. For this you know is the language of the Psalmist, and it ought never to be forgotten, (Psalm xxxiv. 12, 13,) What man is *he that would love life,* in the truest sense of loving and enjoying it, and would see good, prosperous, and happy days? let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit: Let him turn away from the practice of all that is evil, and do good to the utmost extent of his power; let him seek after peace, and resolutely pursue it, even though it may appear to fly away from him. For the favourable eyes of the Lord [are] continually set

SECT.

VI.

1 Peter III. 8.

\* *He that would love life, &c.*] The apostle here urges in favour of the virtues he recommends, that by these the comforts of life will be secured, ver. 10, 11; the favour of God engaged, ver. 12; and

the malice of men in a great measure disarmed, ver. 13, &c. And these three arguments are indeed of very great weight and importance.

## 208 They should be ready to give a reason of their hope :

SECT. upon the righteous, to watch over and protect them; and his ears [are] ever [open] to listen to the voice of their supplications; but the face of the Lord, his countenance full of wrath and resentment, [is] set against them that do evil; in-  
 1 Peter III. 12. somuch that he will even blot out their names from the book of the living; and cause their remembrance to perish from the earth. These are the things which on the one hand may be hoped for, and on the other dreaded as the consequence of practising, or neglecting religion.

13 And now reflect with yourselves, who shall hurt you? who shall have the ability, or inclination to hurt you, if ye imitate him who is supremely good, if you copy after the benevolence of the Divine Being, and of your great Master, whose whole life was so illustrious an example of the most diffusive generosity and goodness to

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 his followers? But if you should suffer on account of righteousness [ye are] still happy in spite of all the malicious and outrageous efforts of your enemies to render you miserable: therefore fear not their terror,<sup>b</sup> neither be troubled as they are, under the various calamities of life, who are,

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 alas! utterly destitute of your support. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; behave towards him continually with that reverence, with that dutiful and obedient regard, which his unrivalled perfections and glories demand; and [be] always prepared, by a ready and familiar acquaintance with the contents and evidences of your holy religion, and by that cheerfulness and presence of mind which arises from a consciousness of your practical regard to it, to [offer] an apology to every one that demands of you an account of the exalted hope which is in you, and which enabled you to maintain such serenity and composure, under those trouble and persecutions to which the profession of Christianity may expose you. And that this noble defence may be rendered the more effectual, let it be made with meekness and reverence; the

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

<sup>b</sup> Fear not their terror.] Mr. Joseph Mede understands it, as if he had said, Fear not the Jew, nor the Gentile; but sanctify, reverence, and worship the one

living God. Diater. on Luke xi. 2. But I think the interpretation given in the paraphrase is much more natural.

16 Having a good conscience: that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be able to say falsely that your conversation is in Christ.

good fruit of your religious principles appearing in the piety and gentleness of your minds. Let it be your constant endeavour, that *having a good conscience*, you be always bold and courageous in the defence of that system of religion which gives to such a conscience so mighty and stable a support; *that wherein they*, who bitterly oppose your religion, *speak against you as evil-doers*, and lay to your charge crimes of the most detestable nature, *they may be ashamed*; <sup>c</sup> they, I say, *who revile your good*, inoffensive, and useful conversation in the profession of that religion which brings you into such an intimate relation to Christ. For [it is] certainly better to 17 suffer, (if it be the will of God, that you should suffer,) for doing good, than for doing evil; the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the Divine favour, affording the noblest supports in the former case; whereas in the latter, the severest torments that can be endured, are those which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself: to which we may add, that while we suffer for the truth, we have the pleasure of reflecting, that we follow our blessed Redeemer; and this is another most powerful source of consolation, of which I shall presently have occasion to discourse more particularly and largely.

SECT.

VI.

1 Peter

III. 16

17 For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

suffer, (if it be the will of God, that you should suffer,) for doing good, than for doing evil; the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the Divine favour, affording the noblest supports in the former case; whereas in the latter, the severest torments that can be endured, are those which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself: to which we may add, that while we suffer for the truth, we have the pleasure of reflecting, that we follow our blessed Redeemer; and this is another most powerful source of consolation, of which I shall presently have occasion to discourse more particularly and largely.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

How very astonishing, and lamentable is it, that when the way to happiness is so plainly delineated, so few should find it! *What man is there*, who does not desire life, and love many days in which he may see good? Yet how few tongues are kept from evil, how few lips from speaking guile! How few decline from evil, and do good! How few seek peace, and pursue it! On the contrary, how much low cunning and artifice, and what discords and contentions reign among mankind! And they often issue in those bloody wars and fightings, which arise from those lusts that war in our members. How detestable, and how miserable, do these perverse and ungovernable passions render us! How sadly do they prevent the ascent of our prayers to God,

<sup>c</sup> That wherein they speak against you, they may be ashamed.} I think this remarkably illustrated by the strain of that epistle of Pliny, in which he gives an account of his own conduct, in persecuting

the Christians; by which it plainly appears that he was ashamed of what the laws required, when he considered how inoffensive their behaviour was.



## 210 *Reflections on our obligations to sincerity and candour :*

SECT. VI. and the descent of his mercies upon us! Mercies, which he is ever ready to impart to those who are meet and disposed to receive them.

There is, notwithstanding, a little remnant, who are righteous before him; and to them his gracious eye is continually directed for their good; to their cry, yea to the soft whispers of the applications, his ears are ever open. Honoured and happy above all the children of men are they who have the favour and the attention of the great Sovereign of the universe. Who will be able to hurt or injure them, should they have malignity enough to wish and attempt it? And as this loving-kindness of the Lord is thus productive of security and happiness to his people, let it engage us to be followers and imitators of him, who is supremely good. We may then face all the menaces of a frowning world with an holy intrepidity, and sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, making him our fear and our dread, we need not have any terrible apprehensions of what men or devils can do unto us. Yea, we shall in that case, not only have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope, which can conduce to our real and everlasting felicity. Encouraged by these important considerations, let it be our care, in the fear of God, to study and endeavour clearly to understand the foundations of our religion, and of our glorious hopes, that we may be able to defend it against every attack, however formidable, and to give an account of our hope to all who shall demand it, in sweet harmony and complacency of soul, undisturbed with the disquietude, and untainted with the example, of those who render evil for evil, and railing for railing. On the contrary, let us greatly triumph over all ill-usage, by repaying it with good; and may a sense of that important blessing, which by the gospel we are called to inherit, diffuse that pleasure and happiness through our whole souls, which may carry them above the resentment of the little injuries we receive from the unkindness of men, and dispose us to every genuine expression of that unlimited benevolence, which should fill and expand the hearts of those who are thus feasted with the Divinest hopes and consolations.

## S E C T. VII.

*The apostle Peter urges on the Christian converts the atonement, resurrection, and exaltation, of their Divine Saviour, the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and the awful solemnity of the last judgment, to engage them to a life of Christian*

mortification and holiness, whatever opposition they might be called to encounter. 1. Pet. III. 18.—IV. 6.

1 PETER III. 18.  
FOR Christ also  
suffered for sin, the  
just for the unjust,  
(that he might bring  
us to God) he was  
put to death in the  
flesh, but quickened  
by the spirit :

1 PETER III. 18.

I HAVE already observed, that if it be the will of God you should suffer, it is better it should be for doing well than for doing evil; and it is very evidently so, *because* hereby we are made conformable to Christ our Head and Leader, whom it cannot but be our glory and happiness to resemble; for he *also once suffered for sins*<sup>a</sup>; he, who was so eminently, and perfectly *the just*, suffered *for the unjust*, for our benefit, and in our stead, *that he might introduce us to God*, and fix us in a state of acceptance and favourable intercourse with him, *being indeed put to death in the flesh*, by those enemies whom God permitted for a while to triumph over him; *but quickened by the spirit of God*<sup>b</sup>, which soon re-animated his body, and raised it to an immortal life: Even that <sup>19</sup> Spirit, *by the inspiration of which* granted to his faithful servant Noah, *going forth*, as it were, in that progress in which he employed him, *he preached* to those notorious sinners, who for their disobedience, have since experienced the just severity of *the Divine vengeance*, and are now in the condition of separate *spirits*, reserved as it were, *in prison*<sup>c</sup>, to the severer judgment at the great day. I speak of those, *who were long* 20

SECT.  
VII.

1 Peter  
III. 18.

<sup>a</sup> By which also  
he went and preach-  
ed unto the spirits in  
prison;

<sup>a</sup> *Because Christ also once suffered, &c.]* The following section, though it seems a kind of digression occasioned by the apostle's mentioning the name of his blessed Master, yet is, in the main, properly connected with his purpose of animating them under their sufferings.

<sup>b</sup> *Quickened by the spirit.]* Dr. More renders it, *remaining alive in the spirit*, and urges it as an argument against the *sleep of the soul*. More's Theol. Works, p. 17.

<sup>c</sup> *The spirits in prison.]* Hardly any text has been more differently interpreted than this. Some understand it of *souls* who were in some *lower place* in paradise, in *paradisus*, or *in a watch-tower*, where they were waiting for the Redeemer's coming: others of those in *hell*, whom he delivered, to *grace his triumph*. See Dr.

More's Theolog. Works, p. 18. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 228. Lord Barrington understands it of Noah's preaching to his own family, shut up with him in the ark: while Dr. Whitby and Burnet understand it of those who were in the darkness of heathen ignorance. Burnet's four Discourses, p. 68, 69. Compare Limborch's Theol. 3. xiii. 27, 28. Upon the whole, I think the sense given in the paraphrase is most easy; and next to that, know none more probable than that of Mr. Cradock, who explains it of Christ's preaching, while he was on earth, to those who were now *spirits in prison*; which might engage them to a holy caution, lest they also should trifle with the means of salvation which they enjoyed, and perish as the former did. Compare Mat. v. 25; Rev. xx. 7.

SECT.

VII.

1. Peter

III. 20.

since disobedient, when once the abused and insulted long-suffering of a compassionate God waited upon them, in the days of the patriarch Noah, during the succession of one hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing; in which few, that is, eight souls, of Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, were carried safely through the water<sup>d</sup>, in which the residue

21 of mankind perished. The antitype to which, (or that which corresponds to, and was figured by it, that is, by the preservation of Noah's family in the ark,) does now save us, or is the instrument of our safety and preservation, as the ark was of theirs; [*I mean*] baptism, whereby we are received into the Christian church, and numbered amongst the heirs of salvation; but then it is to be remembered, that it is not merely the putting away the pollution of the flesh by the use of material water, for that would be very insignificant; but the answer of a good conscience<sup>e</sup>, the reply that it makes when interrogated in the presence of God, and spoken in such a language as he only is capable of hearing and understanding; and when this likewise is found, then we attain salvation, by that great event in which at baptism we declare ourselves believers; I mean the resurrection of our Lord-

22 Jesus Christ from the dead; Who is now set down at the right hand of God, being gone into heaven<sup>f</sup>, there to take possession of the glory

time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

The like figure whereunto even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

23 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right-hand of God; angels, and

<sup>d</sup> Carried safely through the water. *ἀρπαγέντες*.] Raphaelus abundantly justifies this sense of the participle *ἀρπαγέντες*, when used with a *genitive* case. See Annot. ex Xenoph. in loc.

<sup>e</sup> The antitype to which.] That is, the thing which correspond, not with the water, but with the ark.

<sup>f</sup> Baptism, not the putting away the pollution of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience. It is well known the Jews laid a great stress upon their lustrations. The apostle therefore very properly cautions them against such foolish dependencies. A courageous readiness in the performance of their whole duty, and even in suffering persecution for the sake of truth, was absolutely necessary, in order to maintain that good conscience, to which in their baptism they professed such a regard, and to the exercise of which they so solemnly engaged themselves.—Archbishop Leighton has observ-

ed in this place, that the word *ἀρπαγέντες* here used, is a judicial word, and signifies interrogations used in the law for a trial, or executing a process, which is much preferable to the translation Dr. Barrow gives us, namely, the free and sincere stipulation. Barrow's Works, Vol. I. p. 353.—It is a credible fact, supported by Cyprian, and other ancient writers, that the catechumen had certain interrogations put to him at baptism, concerning his faith in Christ, and his renunciation of Satan, and all the works of darkness, and the vanity of the world; and it is very probable the apostle may refer to that custom.

<sup>f</sup> Being gone into heaven, &c.] When the apostle speaks of the resurrection and glory of Christ, he means not only to represent him as the object of our confidence; but to intimate, that if we imitate him in his courageous fidelity, we may hope to partake with him in his glory

authorities and powers, being made subject unto him.

prepared for him, where he reigns supreme over all worlds; all the angels, and authorities, and powers, which are there enthroned, being made subject to him, and humbly bowing before his superior dignity and authority.

SECT.

VII.

1 Peter

III. 22.

1. 2. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us, the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same: and for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin:*

*As Christ therefore has suffered for us in the* IV. 1.

*flesh* such extreme and amazing sufferings as are not to be described, and even when their weight lay heaviest upon him, even in the agony of death, persisted in his generous design to accomplish all that was needful for our redemption and salvation; I beseech you, *arm yourselves likewise with the same* fortitude and resolution of mind in his cause, whatever extremities you may be called out to endure. And let this engage you, on the like principles, to mortify all your irregular desires, and to die to sin; *for he who hath*, in conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ, *suffered this crucifixion in the flesh* of which I now speak; *he has ceased from the habitual practice of all sin whatsoever,*<sup>h</sup> and considers himself as absolutely and finally dead

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

to it, *so as never to return to it any more: And* 2 *no longer to live [his] remaining time in the flesh*, whether it be shorter or longer, *according to the lusts of men*, those lusts by which they are too frequently and generally governed; *but according to the will of God*, in a holy conformity and obedience to the Divine precepts, how contrary soever they are to his own carnal and sensual inclinations, or to his worldly interests.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

*For surely, the time of life that is past* 3 *[may] appear to [be] sufficient, and more than sufficient for us, to have forgotten the great end for which life was given, and to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;* following those pleasures and pursuits to which the heathens that know not God, are addicted; *when ye walked in all the variety of lasciviousness, inordinate desires, excess of wine, banqueting, drunkenness,*

<sup>h</sup> *He who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin &c.* It is plain, that suffering in the flesh, cannot signify suffering death; because the apostle, in the very next verse mentions the remaining part of life as not to be spent in the lusts

of the flesh. The sense, to be sure, is something obscure, and I have sometimes doubted whether it may not intimate, that the consciousness of having endured suffering for Christ greatly confirms our motives to obedience.

SECT. and unlawful detestable idolatries:<sup>1</sup> In respect  
VII. to which abominable course of life, they who

were once your partners in such enormities,  
1. Peter now think it strange<sup>2</sup> that you run not with  
IV. 4. them, as you once did, into the same profusion  
of the most profligate riot:<sup>3</sup> speaking evil [of you,]

5 wretched creatures as they are, Who, though  
forgetful of the true honour and happiness of  
the human nature, shall nevertheless give an  
account of all this disorder and abuse, to him who  
is ready in a little time to appear, that he may  
6 judge the living and the dead: For it was to this  
purpose that the gospel was preached also to the  
dissolute Gentiles, who might truly be said to  
be dead in trespasses and sins, that they might be  
judged according to men in the flesh;<sup>4</sup> that  
they might be brought to such a state of  
life, as their carnal neighbours will look up-  
on as a kind of condemnation and death;  
but might live according to God in the Spirit,  
might be brought to a truly spiritual and Di-  
vine life: and if when men hear of the gos-  
pel, they will not receive and improve it for this

4 Wherein they  
think it strange (that  
you run not with  
them to the same ex-  
cess of riot, speaking  
evil of ...)

7 Who shall give  
account to him that  
is ready to judge the  
quick and the dead.

6 For, for this  
cause was the gospel  
preached also to them  
that are dead, that  
they might be judged  
according to men in  
the flesh, but live ac-  
cording to God in the  
spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Unlawful idolatries.] Considering how  
very acrise the Jews were, in the apos-  
tles' time, to idolatry, I cannot think in this  
passage he hath a respect to them, and  
therefore I look upon this as one argu-  
ment among many, which might be ur-  
ged, to prove that this epistle was written  
to Gentile, as well as Jewish Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Think it strange: *ἐνζήτησις*] Rapi-  
lius, (Annot. ex. Polyb. in loc.) and  
others, have observed that the original  
word is very emphatical, and expresses a  
perfect amazement and consternation of  
mind. The same word is used below at  
the 12th verse.

<sup>3</sup> Profusion of riot.] This is a very li-  
teral translation of Archbishop Leighton.

<sup>4</sup> That they might be judged, &c.] This  
interpretation which is preferred by  
Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to  
me, on a full examination, most proba-  
ble; though the text must be confessed  
to be extremely difficult. Some have  
thought the apostle refers to those who  
then suffered martyrdom for Christianity,  
as if he had said, "It was gospel indeed,  
good tidings, even to those who died for  
it; for though men condemned their bod-  
ies, yet the salvation of their souls,  
which is of infinitely greater importance,  
has been secured by it," Dr. Whitby

renders the latter clause, "That they  
might condemn their former life, and  
live a better." But this does not pre-  
serve the force of *κρίνωσι*, nor the oppo-  
sition between *κατ' ἀνθρώπους* and *κατὰ  
Θεόν*. Sir N. Knatchbull supposes it to  
be understood before *κατὰ*, and renders  
it, "That they who are according to men  
in the flesh, that is, live a sensual life,  
may be condemned; and they who live  
according to God in the spirit, (that is,  
a holy life) may live." No interpretation  
seems more singular than that of Mr.  
Saurin; who seems to consider it as re-  
ferring to chap. iii. 19, and understands  
it of the sinners of the old world; and  
founds upon this text some hopes of the  
salvation of some of them; as if the mean-  
ing were, God sent his message to them  
with a kind design, that though their bod-  
ies perished, their souls might be saved;  
and he fancies that for this reason the  
flood came gradually upon them. Saur.  
Diss. Vol. I. p. 112. If that interpreta-  
tion be preferred, which refers it to those  
actually dead, it will be, (as Mr. Baxter  
observes,) a proof of the existence of spirits  
in a separate state. The chief objection  
against the sense I have chosen, is, that  
it changes the signification of the word  
dead so soon.

important purpose, they must expect to render sect.  
to God an impartial and severe account for their vii.  
abuse of it, and must stand by all the terrible  
consequences of their folly.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET our devoutest meditations frequently dwell on the benefits we receive by the death of Christ, and the wonderful manner in which they are conveyed. The important end, for which he *Chap.*  
*suffered, the just for the unjust, was to introduce us into the* iii. 19  
presence and favour of God: let us rejoice, that we are brought  
nigh to the Infinite Majesty of heaven, the indefectible source  
of perfection and blessedness; and always live as in state of near-  
ness and intimacy with him; dreading the most distant approach  
to that disobedience to the heavenly message, which even after  
the patience of God waited on them, proved fatal to the sinful 20  
inhabitants of the old world. That patience indeed waits upon  
us; but as their time was limited, so is ours. For ever blessed  
be the Father of mercies, that by Christ he hath made provision  
for our salvation, as he did of old for Noah and his family, by com-  
manding him to prepare an ark. But then let us remember, *the* 21  
*baptism that saves is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but*  
*the answer of a good conscience towards God*. If we have this 22  
inward witness, let the resurrection of Christ, and his exaltation  
to supreme glory at the right hand of the Father, encourage our  
sublimest hopes; and let us triumph in him as our all-sufficient  
Saviour, who, though he were once crucified, now sits on the  
throne of his glory, principalities and powers being made sub-  
ject to him.

Let the recollection of his bitter sufferings excite our zeal and *Chap.*  
courage in his sacred cause, and arm us with a conformity of iv. 1  
sentiments and resolutions to his own; that we may cease from 2  
sin; that we may spend the residue of our lives, not in following  
the lusts of the flesh, but in fulfilling, in all respects, the will of  
our God. Let us often reflect, that, perhaps, we were long in- 3  
sensible of his sacred authority, and in many instances were the  
sport of irregular appetites and passions: let the past part of our  
lives suffice, and be deemed more than sufficient, to be spent in  
this inglorious and detestable slavery. By mortification let us  
assert our liberty. And though others wonder at our abstinence,  
severity, and self-denial, let us not envy that excess of riot into  
which, with unbridled eagerness, they allow themselves to run. 4  
But seriously considering the awful account they must render, 5  
(though alas! so ill prepared for it,) to the great Judge of quick  
and dead; let us readily choose, and cheerfully submit to the  
severest mortification which God may require of us. Let us

SECT. rather embrace a life which infidels would esteem death, than  
 VII. expose our immortal souls to the judgment of God, to his con-  
 demnation from which there lies no appeal, and which will con-  
 Ver. 6. sign over impenitent sinners to an execution infinitely dreadful,  
 beyond their utmost fears and apprehensions.

## S E C T. VIII.

*The apostle exhorts the Christian converts to watchfulness and to fidelity, that they might rightly improve their several talents, and discharge the duties of their respective stations in the church; and to courage and fortitude amidst their discouragements and persecutions; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes that a tremendous inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving. 1 Pet. IV. 7--19.*

## I PETER IV. 7.

SECT. **H**OW strongly are vain and sinful men at-  
 VIII. tached to the amusements and interests of  
 this mortal life, and to the gratification of their  
 lusts ! *But the important end of all things is at*  
 I Peter hand, when this earthly globe, and all things  
 IV. 7. which are therein, shall be burnt up, when the  
 eternal state of all its inhabitants shall be deter-  
 mined, and immutable happiness, or misery,  
 shall be their final portion. *Be sober therefore,*  
*and watch* against all occasions of intemperance  
 and of impurity, and endeavour to preserve your  
 souls in so Divine a posture, as that you may  
 be habitually qualified for joining in prayer and  
 those other exercises of devotion, which have  
 such an influence on our whole conduct. *And*  
*above all things* be careful to remember the dis-  
 tinguishing badge of your religion, having and  
 maintaining fervent love towards one another,  
 which as it will be very comfortable and honour-  
 able to yourselves, will be very pleasing and  
 acceptable to God; for on the whole, as the wise

I PETER IV. 7.  
**B**UT the end of  
 all things is at  
 hand : be ye there-  
 fore sober, and watch  
 unto prayer.

above all  
 be fervent  
 in charity among your

\* *The end of all things, &c.* I cannot think this signifies the destruction of Jerusalem; an event, in which most of those to whom the apostle wrote, were comparatively but little concerned. It undoubtedly signifies either death, which may be considered as the end of

the whole world to every particular person; or the consummation of all things, which may be said to be at hand, in the sense in which our Lord, long after the destruction of Jerusalem, says to the church, "Behold I come quickly" Rev. xxii. 7, 20.

selves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging—

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial

man assures us, *love will cover a multitude of sins*; <sup>b</sup> it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through Divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings. *Be hospitable to each other,*

*without grudging* the expence which may attend the exercise of a virtue which in present circumstances is so important and necessary. *As*

*every one has received the free gift of God, exercise it towards each other,* as becomes those who know they are not themselves proprietors, but merely stewards of what they possess, and who desire to approve themselves *good stewards of the manifold grace of God*, with which they have the honour to be intrusted. *If any one speak*

*in public assemblies, discoursing on the great topics of the gospel, [let him handle the subject]* with seriousness and reverence, and as becomes one who knows that sublime dispensation contains no discoveries of doctrine or duty, but what are indeed *the oracles of God*. *If any one minister*, in any office of kindness to others, and particularly in the work of a deacon, *[let it be]* according to the utmost ability which God supplies; that God may in all things be glorified by Jesus Christ, who has called us to his service, and to the hope of enjoying him for ever; to whom, as our great Redeemer and Saviour, be glory and dominion ascribed for ever and ever. Amen.

And now, my beloved brethren, let me seriously caution you, that you be not surprised at the fiery trial,<sup>c</sup> at the dreadful series of furious

<sup>b</sup> *Love will cover a multitude of sins.* This is agreeable to the interpretation given of the parallel text, James v. ult. For the further illustration of it, compare Eccles. iii. 20; Psal. xviii. 2; Prov. x. 12; Dan. iv. 27. It would be monstrous to imagine, that acts of liberality to the poor can procure the pardon of sin, while men continue in a course of impotence and unbelief; for by this the whole gospel would be subverted; but where acts of charity to the souls and bodies of men spring from an inward principle of love to God, and faith in Christ, with that humble regard to his atonement and righteousness, which every true Christian will

have, it cheerfully encourages our hopes of finding many merciful allowances from God in our final account with him, which those who are destitute of this Divine principle, in which so much of the image of God consists, must never expect, whatever faith or sanctity they may pretend to. Compare Mat. vii. 1, 2; James ii. 13.

<sup>c</sup> *The fiery trial*; *ωρεωσις*.] This is a metaphor, borrowed from chemical operations, and very emphatically expresses the nature of those trials, in the furnace of affliction, which were intended to refine their graces, and separate all the dross and alloy from the pure gold.

SECT. VII.  
1 Peter IV. 8.



SECT. VIII. and bitter persecutions, *which is to try you as if some strange and unexampled thing, beyond all reasonable expectation, had befallen you:* But

1 Peter  
IV. 13.

rather rejoice in these trials, as being therein partakers of the sufferings of Christ, the memory of which should ever be dear and precious to you; *that when his final glory shall be revealed, ye, in the participation of it, may be even transported with joy far beyond what can now be de-*

14 scribed, or conceived: In the mean time, while you are in this present world, and obnoxious to persecutions and injuries, *if you are reproached for the name of Christ, [ye are] happy,* and ought to reckon yourselves so, *because the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you;* which will support you under it, and spread a lustre around you; and *[though] he, in whose cause you suffer so unjustly, is blasphemed on their part, yet on yours, he is glorified:* it shews the excellence and sublime spirit of true religion, that it can support you under the opprobrious and cruel treatment which you endure,

15 for adhering to it and defending it. But let not any of you, who have the honour to bear the Christian name, by any means suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a malefactor, of any other kind, or even as over-busy and assuming in the affairs of others,<sup>e</sup> aspiring to direct, over-

which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

13 But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God, resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters.

<sup>d</sup> *When his glory shall be revealed.*] There is no occasion with Mr. Fleming to interpret this of the glory of the Shechinah, appearing at the millenium, to excite the exceeding joy of the saints after the first resurrection. Flom. Christol. Vol. III. p. 868. It probably refers to the great and glorious day of Christ's second appearance, which is so often spoken of as the grand jubilee of Christians, though not inconsistent with great joy to be received by the spirit of every good man, immediately on its entrance into the intermediate state.

<sup>e</sup> *Spirit of glory and of God.*] The Vulgar reading is, "The spirit of honour, and of glory, and Divine power, even the Spirit of God, rests upon you." But I take the meaning to be in general, you shall have the Spirit of God, in a very glorious manner to support you in proportion to the trials you are called out to; and this will spread a glory around you, even

though you may be treated in the most infamous manner, as the vilest of malefactors, which we know many of the primitive Christians were.

<sup>f</sup> *As over-busy in the affairs of others.*] Αὐλοποιῶντες, says the learned Dr. Lardner, cannot here signify merely a prying into the concerns of private families; which could not be ranked with such crimes as are here mentioned, nor expose a man to the punishment of the civil magistrate: but it may signify a man that affects to inspect, or direct the affairs of others; perhaps that aspires to public authority, a temper which appeared much amongst the Jews, particularly at Alexandria, and Cesarea, and which would naturally give great offence to the Romans, and make them very dangerous enemies. If therefore any thing of this kind might appear among Christians, it would be of particular bad consequence in those times. Lardn. Cred. Vol. I. p. 426. I have pa-

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be

rule and determine them in a manner not suiting your station in life; in consequence of which you may bring any degree of ill-will upon yourselves. But if it please Providence to appoint, that [any of you] should [suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, though the punishment, like that inflicted upon his Divine Master himself, should be ever so infamous; but rather let him glorify God in this respect, despising the shame, as well as resolutely enduring the agony that may attend it; Because the time [is coming,] and just at hand, when judgment is to begin at the house of God; for he hath determined to exercise his own people with very severe trials, giving them up for a while to the malice of their enemies; that by this means their characters may be approved, and those who are hypocrites may be separated from those who are sincere in their Christian profession; and if [it begin] first with us, what [shall be] the end of those, who are obstinately and presumptuously disobedient to the gospel of God, and who not only reject it, but persecute its professors, and endeavour to root it out of the world? And if the righteous himself be saved with difficulty,

SECT. VII.  
1 Peter VI. 16.

raphrased the words so as to suggest this, yet so as to take in the most that could be imagined to be intended.

"Time is coming when judgment is to begin at the house of God." As, if he had said, "Do not think this a matter of uncertain speculation." No, the time foretold by Christ (John xvi. 2, &c.) "is coming." I doubt not there is an allusion to that passage in Ezek. ix. 6. where it is said the slaughter to be made was to begin at the sanctuary; but this cannot be interpreted as of the Temple of Jerusalem, because it answers to beginning with us, that is, Christians, immediately after. So that Grotius's criticism upon the word *τοῦ* in the latter clause of this verse, as answering to *הַכֶּלֶל*, Dan. ix. 27. and to *τοῦ* in Mat. xxiv. 6. seems quite foreign to the purpose.

"If the righteous be saved with difficulty." The apostle seems to quote Prov. xi. 31, according to the Seventy, which in sense, though not exactly in words, agrees with the Hebrew. He cannot intend deliverance from the Roman invasion, in which

so very few of those Christians were concerned; nor merely deliverance from any of their persecutors, because he takes it for granted, that in this sense the righteous would be saved, though with difficulty; whereas multitudes fell by persecution, even of these Christians in Bithynia, as appears by Pliny's letter. It is necessary therefore to understand it more generally, of the difficulty with which good men get to heaven, through this dangerous and ensnaring world. Compare Acts xiv. 18; xxvii. 7, 8, 16. where *πολλοί* signifies with difficulty; in which sense it is also used by Philo. (See Wolfii Curæ Philolog. Vol. V. p. 161.)—The turn of the latter clause of the verse in the original, which I have endeavoured to preserve, is very lively; it seems as if the apostle were solicitous to lead the sinner to consider, where he should hide his head; since wherever he was, he would find God immediately appearing against him, as an irresistible enemy. This he might say by way of warning to persecutors, and to encourage Christians to hope that God

how miserable must *the ungodly and the sinner* be? *where shall he appear* in the day of Divine vengeance, when all nature shall be, as it were, armed with terror, by the God of nature, for his destruction; and when all impious transgressors shall be brought forth in his awful presence, that his just, though dreadful sentence of condem-

SECT.  
VIII.  
Peter  
IV. 18.

nation, may be executed in its rigour? *Therefore let them also, who now suffer this temporary punishment, which according to the will of God so permitting, their enemies have at present a power of inflicting, acknowledge the providence of God in this mysterious event, and commit their souls [to him] as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing; assured that while they continue to act as under a sense of his presence, and endeavour to approve themselves to him, he will regard them as his creatures, and even his children, and will render their immortal interests secure, whatever injuries of a temporal nature he may suffer them to sustain.*

aved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

49 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 7. LET us continually bear in mind the approaching end of all things; and then we shall neither omit the exercises of devotion, nor grow supine and careless in the discharge of them. Then shall we be engaged, through a sense of our need of the Divine clemency and indulgence, to exercise forbearance and candour, and maintain the most fervent charity to all without distinction; and we shall then be more disposed to consider ourselves as stewards, and as such, be concerned to behave with all good fidelity, both in the use and enjoyment of our possessions, and in the exercise of those gifts and endowments with which God hath been pleased to intrust us. To this they should especially attend, who are called to speak in God's name; they should consider, that his oracles are committed to them: and though they cannot pretend, that the instructions they deliver from thence, are revealed to and impressed upon their minds by immediate inspiration, yet a reflection on the general nature of the glorious gospel, and on its important and everlasting consequences, may well dispose and form them to an humble awe and reverence in their manner of handling and dispensing it; and may remind them, that on the whole, in every ministration of the word of

would vindicate their cause, and preserve paths. And this the connection with the them from turning aside to crooked following verse favours.

life, in every distribution of charity, and office of kindness, the main end to be pursued is, *That God may be glorified.*

. If, in the cause of Christ, Providence should call us out to encounter the severest persecutions, and even fiery trials, let us not be astonished, as if some strange thing had happened to us; let us not be discouraged, nor think ourselves hardly dealt with in such divine appointments; remembering that in this case, we are only partakers in the sufferings of Christ, that we only tread in the same rough and thorny path in which he walked before us; and that in due time, if we continue faithful to him, we shall also be made partakers of his glory. In the mean while, the Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon us; only let us be jealous of his honour with a godly jealousy, and be greatly concerned, that our sins and indiscretions may not throw a blemish on a profession which derives its appellation from him. Glorious are the privileges indeed which belong to the disciples of Christ; but they, notwithstanding, draw very awful consequences after them. For judgment begins at the house of God, and even his dearest children are exercised with trials of their fidelity and patience. Let us prepare for them before they come, that when they do come, we may bear them honourably, *committing the keeping of our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing.* But let the wicked and the ungodly meditate terror; for the vengeance of God will find them out; the great day of wrath will come; and who can be able to stand? May divine grace reclaim those who are now exposed to so terrible a condemnation; lest they know by experience, what no words can describe, no thought conceive, *the end of those who obey not the gospel of God!*

# SECT. IX.

*The apostle concludes this epistle with particular cautions to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a steadfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a-while make them perfect, according to his earnest prayer for them.*  
1 Pet. V. 1, to the end.

1 PETER V. 1.

THE elders which are among you

1 PETER V. 1.

I WOULD now in the most affectionate manner address myself to those who are the elders among you, or any other Christian societies into whose hands this epistle may come; and I would exhort them with the greater warmth and

SECT. freedom, [as I also am] an elder with them, and  
IX. an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ, and as

I Peter I also hope, through Divine grace, that I shall be  
V. 1. a partaker of the glory, which shall hereafter  
be revealed, when he shall appear the second  
time, in circumstances so different from those in  
which we have seen and conversed with him

2 on earth. By all the engagements of love  
and duty to him, and by all the regard you owe  
to your own honour and happiness in that im-  
portant day, let me beseech you to feed the flock  
of God that is among you, the churches of Christ  
which you are called to preside over; discharge  
the episcopal office<sup>a</sup> with that due inspection  
which its very name imports: not by constraint,<sup>b</sup>  
as if it were an ungrateful burthen, but willingly,  
and cheerfully; not for the sake of dishonourable  
gain,<sup>c</sup> but of a ready mind, and because you  
love the flock, and readily desire its edification

3 and welfare. Not assuming to yourselves do-  
minion over those who fall to your lot;<sup>d</sup> but

exhort, who am also  
an elder, and a wit-  
ness of the sufferings  
of Christ, and also a  
partaker of the glory  
that shall be reveal-  
ed:

2 Feed the flock  
of God which is a-  
mong you, taking  
the oversight there-  
of, not by constraint,  
but willingly: not  
for filthy lucre, but  
of a ready mind:

3 Neither as being  
lords over God's he-  
ritage, but being en-

<sup>a</sup> Discharge the episcopal office.] This  
idea is so plainly suggested by the word  
*ἐπιτοκῶντες*, that I thought it matter of  
duty to translate it as I have done; that  
every reader might observe, what all can-  
did people seem to confess, that those  
who are styled bishops, from their hav-  
ing the oversight of others, and also pres-  
byters or elders, are spoken of as the  
same person: Compare ver. 1. And I  
hope the time will come, when good men  
will join their efforts to remove that very  
hard imposition by which the ministers  
of some churches are obliged, in order to  
their entering into the ministry, to de-  
clare, not only that they are different or-  
ders, but that it is evident unto all men  
diligently reading the holy scripture, that  
they are so.

<sup>b</sup> Not by constraint.] It is true, that  
in the primitive church some were almost  
against their will forced into the episcopal  
office by dint of importunity. And one  
would hope, it was not an affected mo-  
desty with which they declined the office,  
especially as it was then attended with no  
temporal emoluments, but exposed them  
to distinguished labours and sufferings.  
It is difficult to see how any could in the  
strictest sense be constrained; but perhaps  
the apostle saw some good men too un-  
willing to accept the office, when the  
churches chose them to it, and when in-

spired teachers urged it upon them. And  
though little gain could have been made  
of it, and the temptation to lord it over  
God's heritage was not so great, as when  
ecclesiastical persons were invested with  
civil power, (in which most of the honour  
and influence of their ecclesiastical cha-  
racters, as such, has been generally lost,)  
yet foreseeing what would happen in the  
church, and observing perhaps some dis-  
coveries of such a temper beginning to  
prevail, the caution was exceedingly just,  
proper, and important. Compare Luke  
x. 2, and the note there.

<sup>c</sup> Dishonourable gain.] See the note on  
1 Tim. iii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Those who fall to your lot.] The word,  
God, is not in the original. I think  
therefore, it is with abundant reason, that  
the learned Mr. Boyns refers this to their  
not domineering over the particular con-  
gregations, or bishoprics, which were  
by Providence committed to their care;  
alluding to the division of Canaan by lots.  
Boyns's Serm. Vol. II. p. 413. An inter-  
pretation much preferable to Dr. Whitby's,  
who explains it of the possessions of the  
church. (Compare Col. i. 12, note<sup>k</sup>.) And  
yet after proposing this interpretation at  
large, he admits at the close of his note,  
that what is here styled *κλῆρος*, being in  
the same sentence expressed by *ἐκκλησία*,  
the flock of God, it seems to establish the

samples to the flock. *being humble, and behaving towards them with such gentle tender solicitude for their souls, and such an entire freedom from the very appearance either of avarice or ambition, that your examples may be rendered worthy the imitation of the flock, and your conduct as instructive as any of your cautions and precepts can be: And if this be indeed your character and behaviour; you will render up your account hereafter with joy; for when he, who does you the honour to acknowledge himself the chief Shepherd of the flock, shall appear, to take the final survey of it, and examine into the conduct of those to whom he had partly committed it, you shall be most magnificently and nobly rewarded, and receive an unfading crown of glory: a crown which shall bloom in immortal beauty and vigour, when all the transitory glories of this world are withered like a fading flower.*

SECT.

IX.

1 Peter  
V. 2.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 Likewise, ye, younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

But it is proper that I should likewise address some exhortations to others besides ministers; and particularly to you, *O ye younger persons; and that I should urge you to be in subjection to those [who are] more advanced in age, and to pay a decent respect to their hoary hairs. Yea, let all [of you] be subject to one another, endeavouring, by mutual condescension, to make each other as easy and happy as possible; and for this purpose be clothed with unfeigned humility; for God opposeth himself to the proud; and draws up all his terrors, as it were, in battle array against him; but giveth grace and favour to the humble*

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

*soul. Humble yourselves therefore with that just reverence under the mighty hand of God, (under all the dispensations of Divine Providence, even though wicked men should be made the instruments of effecting its purposes,) that so he may exalt you in due time; for in his own*

common interpretation. What the learned Mr. Dodwell had offered in support of the sense Dr. Whitby mentions is particularly considered and refuted by Wolinus *Carm Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 163.

\* *Mighty hand of God.* Perhaps by this expression, the apostle may intend to remind them, that the hand of a righteous

Providence was concerned in those events which were owing to the wickedness of men; so far concerned, as to over-rule them, and render them instrumental and subservient to the accomplishment of his own wise designs; as is strongly intimated, Isa. x. 5; Psal. xvii. 14, and in many parallel places.

1824 T. most proper and well-chosen season, he will certainly raise you up, though for the present you may seem to be depressed to the lowest condition.

IX.  
1 Peter  
V. 7.

In the mean while, whatever uncertainties and dangers may attend you, endeavour to live as easy as possible; *casting all your anxious care,*<sup>f</sup> and all those burdens that might otherwise occasion it, *upon him*; leaving it to his all-wise and all gracious Providence to determine every event of your lives; *for he careth for you*, in a manner the most effectual; and his tender care will accomplish infinitely more than your ut-

8 most anxiety can possibly effect. Turn your solicitude therefore into the right channel; *be sober* in the government of your appetites and passions, *be watchful*<sup>g</sup> against every occasion of mischief from your spiritual enemies; *for your great and inveterate adversary the devil is continually walking about,*<sup>h</sup> *like a roaring lion*, or evening wolf, prowling round the fold, *seeking whom he may assault* with the greatest likelihood of success, and may suddenly devour and swal-

9 low up. If *whom*, therefore, as you regard your safety and life, be careful stoutly to *resist*, *being stedfast* in your adherence to the Christian faith, and armed with the most heroic courage and resolution in its defence. And to this you should the rather attend, as *knowing that* the trials, with which you are exercised, are not peculiar to you; but that, *the same afflictions*, which you are called out to encounter, *are accomplished* in others of your Christian brethren. *who are in the world*, and you may reasonably hope, the same grace which is their support, will be also yours.

10 But may the God who is the great fountain of all grace, from whom descendeth every good and every perfect gift, and who hath displayed his

7 Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you

8 Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Whom resist, stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God

<sup>f</sup> Your anxious care ] So I have rendered it *heavy*, because that is the proper signification of it, what does, as it were, bend and tear the mind to pieces. See. Gillson's Works, Vol II. p 629.

<sup>g</sup> Be watchful ] St Peter might well give such a caution as this, having himself received such particular and express warning from Christ his Master, (Luke 22:31, &c) and so shamefully fallen

immediately after, for want of the watchfulness he here recommends.

<sup>h</sup> Walking about ] I chose to express *wigwag* with this exactness, that the force of its signification in this similitude might be observed. The word *wagwag* expresses, more than *devouring*, even *swallowing up*, and so represents the insatiable rage of the enemy of our salvation with great advantage.

of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile; make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

goodness in innumerable important instances, even He *who has called us to the hope and enjoyment of his eternal glory in Christ Jesus*: may he grant you his perpetual presence and enlivening favour; and *when you have suffered for a little while*, such trials as his infinite wisdom shall see fit to appoint, may he *make you perfect* in every good disposition; in whatever improvements you are enabled to make, may he *confirm, strengthen, and establish [you]* upon a firm and unshaken foundation. *To him, therefore,*

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Sylvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I suppose) I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand

who of all beings is infinitely most worthy of it, [he] *glory and dominion ascribed for ever and ever, Amen.* I have written briefly unto you

12 by the bearer Sylvanus, in whom I place great confidence, as I suppose, and conclude him to be a sincere Christian and faithful brother; one who hath the interest of Christ at heart, and on whose fidelity we may rely, and I send it, *exhorting, and testifying* with the greater solemnity, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye have hitherto stood; and urging it therefore upon you, that you steadily adhere to it in the midst of all your difficulties and persecutions. *The*

13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

13 [church which is] here in Babylon, chosen with [you] to partake of the privileges of the gospel, saluteth you; and [so doth] Marcus, whom I may call my son,<sup>m</sup> as being my

[*Make you perfect.*] If any one please to peruse Archbishop Leighton's excellent discourse on these words, he will have a fine specimen of his commentary on this epistle; which I esteem to be among the most instructive and useful books our language affords, and cannot but consider it as a great honour conferred upon me by Providence, to have been an instrument of presenting it to the world in so correct a form; as well as of rescuing many other instructive pieces of that excellent and amiable author from the oblivion in which they had so long been buried.

[*Sylvanus, as I suppose, a faithful brother.*] Whether this was the Silas, or Sylvanus, mentioned several times in the Acts as the companion of St Paul, and by St Paul himself, 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thes. ii. 1; 2 Thes. i. 1, we cannot certainly say.—The phrase as I suppose, does not seem to imply any doubt. Compare Rom. ii. 28, and viii. 18, in the original.

[*At Babylon.*] Hence Bishop Cumber-

land and Mr Craddock argue, that probably St Peter wrote from the neighbourhood of Babylon, and found many Jews remaining there ever since the Babylonish captivity, among whom he had preached the gospel with considerable success.

[*Marcus my son.*] That is, my convert, or at least my assistant in the ministerial work. I have observed, Vol. III. sect. xxviii. note b, that John Mark, who was the companion of Barnabas and Paul, was a different person from Mark the evangelist, who was the intimate companion of the apostle Peter. And as he was so, it is likely that the evangelist is the Mark of which the apostle here speaks. Under St Peter's instruction he is said to have written his gospel, probably receiving at different times historical facts from him, which he records without very exact order, and which St Luke afterwards greatly illustrated, without changing the order by adding many more important circumstances.

sect.  
ix.  
1. Peter  
v. 10.



SECT. convert, and behaving to me with all filial ten- 14. Greet ye one  
IX. derness and respect. *Salute one another with* another, with a kiss  
*a kiss of pure and unfeigned love in your Chris-* of charity. Peace be  
Peter *tian assemblies; and may grace and peace, and* with you all that are  
14. *the truest happiness, ever [be] with you all who* in Christ Jesus. A-  
*are in Christ Jesus, who is the corner-stone*  
*which God hath laid in Sion, and the great*  
*foundation of all our eternal hopes. Amen.*

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. THIS apostolic charge should be received with the profoundest regard and submission, by all those who profess to reverence the authority of Christ, who thus, by the mouth of his servants, bespeaks their attention; and it should both regulate their conduct, and animate and exalt their hopes. Let us therefore attend to this venerable elder, this witness of the sufferings of Christ, who on the mount of transfiguration had been favoured with an illustrious representation of that glory, wherein our Lord shall be hereafter revealed, and with which he will then invest all those who, in his cause, have approved themselves faithful until death. Let ministers, especially, ever maintain a most affectionate and respectful regard for the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof with a ready and generous mind, and be examples to it in the mild and condescending temper of their common Master, as well as in all other graces and virtues. It is indeed possible they may pursue such a conduct as this, and meet with very little esteem or recompense, yea, with injurious and unworthy treatment, from their fellow-men. But a crown of glory, a royal diadem, incorruptible and immortal, will be hereafter conferred on them by their exalted Saviour, in the day of his triumphant appearance; and this crown, in itself so illustrious, will be a mark of still more distinguished honour, as it will be placed on their victorious heads in a season of such solemnity, in the view of the whole assembled world, and of the innumerable company of angels.—But in the mean time, while we are continued in so lowly a condition in the present world, let us all cultivate humility of mind, being clothed with that amiable virtue, which is certainly the most graceful ornament of our nature; an ornament of singular value in the eye of that God, whose approbation is the surest mark and criterion of excellence and honour. And that we may accordingly entertain the more humble and lowly conceptions of ourselves, and the more grand and venerable ideas of the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, let us often and seriously reflect upon his mighty hand; how gloriously it hath been displayed in the infinite variety of the works of nature, in the continual agency and operation of providence, and in the wonder-

ful scheme of redemption and salvation; how powerful and resistless it is in the execution of all its works; and yet how graciously its awful power is tempered and moderated, and to what kind and merciful purposes it hath been already exerted, and still is, in behalf of such degenerate and unworthy creatures as ourselves. By these considerations, let us be disposed to bow to every Divine dispensation with all resignation and submission; fixing our dependence upon a power so wisely and graciously exerted; rejoicing that we are permitted to cast our cares on God, and abhorring both the ingratitude and folly of fainting and sinking under our burdens, when we are favoured with the permission of relying on him; indeed, with a paternal command, as well as permission; which accordingly requires our obedience in point of duty, as well as of gratitude and honour.

Our great adversary the devil is still continually prowling round the fold of Christ; and therefore it behoves us to be constantly on our guard. And if we would escape both his wiles and his power, let us be especially careful, that neither our security, nor intemperance, give him an advantage over us: but, on the contrary, as it is nothing less than our utter and eternal destruction he aims at, let us strenuously resist him, in the exercise of a steady faith, and with a firm resolution. Let us also remember, that trials and afflictions have been the lot of all the people of God in all generations; and that the God of all grace is able, if it seem good to his infinite wisdom, to shorten and contract the time of our sufferings, and by means of them whilst they last, to strengthen and perfect our immortal souls. Let us, therefore, as the close of all, continue to stand fast in what is so authentically testified to be the true grace of God; and real substantial peace will be with us, will be our everlasting portion, in Christ Jesus. Amen.



THE  
FAMILY EXPOSITOR:  
OR,  
A PARAPHRASE  
ON THE  
SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE  
OF THE  
APOSTLE PETER.  
WITH CRITICAL NOTES,  
AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE SECOND

## CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

**T**HERE were some in the primitive church, who called in question the genuineness and authority of *this epistle*, though it expressly claims St. Peter for its author, and contains very strong internal characters of its authenticity. But this being no proper or convenient place to enter largely into the argument, if any are desirous of seeing it truly and accurately represented, as far as it depends upon the testimonies of the Christian fathers, they may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. As to the internal evidence, there are some general observations, which having made already in the introduction to the epistle of James, I think it unnecessary to repeat, though they are very applicable to the present occasion. But it is fit to observe, in particular, that the author of this epistle hath some allusions or appeals to facts and circumstances as relative to himself, which evidently refer to St. Peter; and that besides, there is a remarkable coincidence between the sentiments of this and of the former epistle; insomuch that it is extreme-

ly probable, it was the production of the same author, intending to confirm the doctrines he had already advanced, in opposition to the scruples of honest men, and the objections of designing ones. St. Jerom, acquainting us with the dispute which had been raised concerning the author and authority of this epistle, informs us at the same time, that it was owing to a remarkable difference of style, in this and the former unquestionably genuine epistle of St. Peter. But the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no difference of style between the two epistles, but only between the former epistle, and a part of this, namely, the second chapter; which indeed is as different from the style of the remainder of this, as it is from that of the whole former epistle. The fact therefore seems to be, (as the learned bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, supposes, in his first dissertation, at the end of his Discourses on Prophecy, which is well worth the reader's perusal;) I say, the fact seems to be, that the apostle in the second chapter of this epistle, describing the character of such seducers and false teachers, as endangered the faith of the Christian converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish author, containing a very strong description, in the eastern manner, of the character and conduct of some false prophets of that, or earlier ages. And as St. Jude hath likewise described these false teachers as well as St. Peter, and there is a remarkable similitude in some respects, and variation in others, between the account of these two apostles, it appears extremely probable, that they both took their principal features of their descriptions from the same author. And if this be a just account, the foundation of all the doubts concerning the genuineness of this epistle, is exceeding feeble; and no other reasonable conclusion can be drawn from them, except the singular caution of the primitive Christians, what writings they honoured with the veneration due to the oracles of God.

This epistle was very probably written about the year 67; which was six years after the date of the former. For the apostle speaks of his death as very near at hand.

*I think it meet, saith he, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me ;* (chap. i. 13, 14;) and ecclesiastical history informs us, that the apostle finished his race by martyrdom in the year 68, the 14th of the emperor Nero.

The general design of this epistle is, To confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former ; “ to excite the Christian converts to adorn and stedfastly adhere to their holy religion, as a religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is at large described ; or the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies.”

The apostle, with this view, having first congratulated the Christian converts on the happy condition into which they were brought by the gospel, exhorts them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in the most substantial graces and virtues. (chap. i. 1—11.) And that their attention might be the more effectually engaged, he reminds them, both that he spoke to them in the near view of eternity, it being revealed to him that he should shortly put off his earthly tabernacle ; and that the subjects on which he discoursed, were not cunningly devised fables, but attested by a miraculous voice from heaven, and by divinely inspired prophecies. (ver. 12, to the end.) And that this exhortation might not fail of producing the most kindly and genuine effects, he cautions them against the false teachers, whose character he describes ; reminding them of the judgments executed on the apostate angels, on the old world, and on Sodom ; and at the same time, of the deliverance of Noah, and of Lot ; as suggesting considerations, which, on the one hand, should terrify such ungodly wretches, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of upright and pious Christians. (chap. ii. 1—9.) He then further describes the character of these seducers ; warning all true Christians of the danger of being perverted by them, and them of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves (ver. 10, to the end.)



And that the persons to whom he was writing, might more effectually escape the artifices of those who lay in wait to deceive, they are directed to adhere steadily and closely to the sacred scriptures, and to consider the absolute certainty and awful manner of the final destruction of this world: and then the whole is concluded with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. chap. iii. throughout.

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

## SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF St. PETER.

## S E C T. I.

*The apostle Peter, after his salutation, begins his epistle with congratulating the Christians on the happy state into which they were brought by the gospel; and urges them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in its most substantial graces and virtues.*  
 2 Pet. I. 1—11.

2 PETER I. 1.

**SIMON** Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 PETER I. 1.

**SIMON** Peter, who has the honour to style himself a servant, and even an apostle of Jesus Christ; being selected by his heavenly Master to that exalted and important office, sends his most affectionate salutation, with this his epistle, to all those to whom it may come, who have obtained like precious faith with us, in that glorious gospel, which is a declaration of life and salvation by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ;<sup>a</sup> in which, sinful as

SECT.

1.

2 Peter:  
I. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Of our God and Saviour, &c.] The order of the original words rather favours this translation, though I confess it is not absolutely necessary, and it may be ren-

SECT. we are, we obtain acceptance with the Father,  
 1. through that atonement which our Divine Redeemer has made, and the perfect righteousness he has introduced, for the justification of all his believing people.

- 2 For this purpose, that this invaluable blessing may be ensured to you, may *grace and peace* be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord;
- 3 most important blessings. This we may cheerfully expect, as *his Divine power has given unto us all things* in such rich abundance, which [relate] both to life and godliness;<sup>b</sup> whereby the present life is rendered much more comfortable to us, and the future and eternal life of our souls is secured. And this we obtain, by the knowledge of him who has, by his gospel, called us by that glory with which he has now invested us, and that strengthening virtue;<sup>c</sup> and
- 4 energy of his spirit: By means of which<sup>d</sup> illustrious seal, set to the declaration of the gospel, are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, relating to blessings infinitely more valuable than any present enjoyments or expectations. And the design of God, in bestowing this inestimable favour is, that by these you may

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord;

3 According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be

dered as in our vision, of God and our Saviour. It is observable, that the order in the next verse is different, and determines it to the translation there used.

<sup>b</sup> Life and godliness.] Some imagine this to be an Hebraism for a godly life; but the meaning is so much enriched by understanding it more literally, that I choose to retain our version, and to paraphrase the words according to it.

<sup>c</sup> By glory and virtue: δια δόξης και αρετης.] This is the proper rendering of δια with a genitive case, as several critics have rightly observed. Dr. Whitby supposes these words to be an hendiadys, and understands them of the glorious and powerful e uion of the Spirit. It is remarkable that the word *aptn*, used so frequently in heathen writers, seldom occurs in the New Testament; and when it does, it does not always signify the whole of a right principle, but generally courage,

(See note<sup>b</sup> below.) And therefore, as the learned Albert observes, (Observ. Philolog. p. 400.) some interpreters, apprehending the word *aptn* to be in no sense applicable to God, but only to men, have rendered this clause contrary to the Greek idiom, to glory and virtue. But it may very properly be understood of that strengthening energy which God exerts on the human mind, which appeared in so extraordinary a manner in the apostolic age.

<sup>d</sup> By means of which.] Some would render *di av*, for the sake of which; that is, as they understand the clause, that we might attain to this glory and virtue, God has made such precious promises, of the pardon of sin, the assistances of his Spirit, and at last, eternal happiness. Dr. Whitby would read it, *di av*, by whom, that is, by Christ; for which he hath the authority of some manuscripts.

partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

*be made partakers of a Divine nature ;<sup>c</sup> transformed into the image of God's moral perfections ; having escaped the corruption [which is] so generally prevalent in the world, through the lust which men are ready to indulge, to the reproach and destruction of their immortal souls.*

SECT.  
I.  
2 Peter  
I. 4.

<sup>5</sup> And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge:

*And for this purpose, <sup>e</sup>applying with all possible diligence, as you have believed the gospel, be careful to accompany that belief with all the lovely train of attendant graces ; associate,<sup>g</sup> as it were, to your faith, virtue,<sup>h</sup> true fortitude and resolution of mind, which may enable you to break through that variety of dangers with which your faith may be attended ; and to this heroic virtue and bravery, that knowledge which*

<sup>6</sup> And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness:

*may direct your resolution aright ; And to <sup>i</sup>knowledge, temperance ; that if you should be in the most plentiful circumstances, they may not be a snare to you, and the bounties of Providence may not be abused to the dishonour of God, and your own detriment ; and to this temperance add <sup>j</sup>patience, as you are not apprised what afflictions may possibly succeed your prosperity, nor how severe they may be ; and to <sup>k</sup>patience add <sup>l</sup>godliness, that devout temper of mind, which will be so powerful a support to your patience, both by the views it gives you of the wisdom and goodness of all the Divine dispensations, and by the pleasure which it will mingle with the most painful exercises and trials : And to <sup>m</sup>godliness add <sup>n</sup>brotherly kindness, that peculiar affection which you owe to*

<sup>7</sup> And to godliness, brotherly-kind-

<sup>c</sup> *Partakers of a Divine nature.*] I cannot think the passages, which are produced from Philo and Josephus, as parallel to this, are sufficient to justify Dr. Whitby's interpreting this phrase of *miraculous and prophetic endowments*.

<sup>e</sup> *For this purpose: αὐτο ὡς τοῦτο.*] The learned Albert supposes the particle *ut* to be understood, and have translated it accordingly.

<sup>g</sup> *Associate*] The word *ἐννομεῖται* properly signifies to lead up, as in a dance, one of these virtues after another in a beautiful and majestic order. See Goodman's Parable of the Prod. p. 296; and Sir Norton Knatchbull in loc.

<sup>h</sup> *Virtue.*] Virtue cannot here signify an universal regularity of mind and manners, (see Titus iii. 8.) because every particular afterwards mentioned, is a virtue in that sense; and the apostle

speaks of each as additional to what went before. It must therefore here signify *courage*, as the original word *ἀνδρεία* often does. (Compare note <sup>c</sup> above.) And it is properly added to faith, in reference to the need faith has of a courageous defence, and of the advantage it gives us for that purpose. The knowledge to be added, signifies not that general knowledge on which faith and virtue must be founded, but an acquaintance with the importance of the several principles and duties comprehended in that general knowledge; and by this courage would properly be directed, which might otherwise act at random. Nor can we imagine, that one of these good qualities can entirely subside without another; but every one is to make up, as it were, a part of the chorus, appealing together in a lovely and venerable train

## 246 *And diligently to make their calling and election sure.*

sect

1.

2 Peter

1. 7.

your fellow-Christians, as your brethren in the Lord, *and add to this brotherly kindness, universal love* to all your fellow-creatures, extending your kind affectionate regards to those who are entirely strangers to that religion which you are so happy as to embrace, and even to those who most unrighteously oppose it, and injure

ness, and to brotherly kindness, charity

8 you for your profession of it. *For if these excellent things which I have now described, exist and abound in you, they will permit [you] to be neither inactive, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*, but as they must put you upon exerting yourselves in consequence of that knowledge, they will make these your endeavours delightful and effectual

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

9 for that purpose. *But he that is deficient in these things, is blind* as to the most important objects of knowledge, at best he is very *short-sighted*, his views are limited to a narrow circle of low and mean objects, which he immediately before him, and cannot take in that enlarged and noble prospect which Christianity sets before him. He shows that *he hath contracted a sad forgetfulness of [his] baptismal engagements*, and of that *purification from the sins of his former life*, which he professed to be in search of, and hoped to find by that solemn ordinance, which initiated him into the Christian church

9 For he that lacketh these things, is blind and is not so far as hath respect to the things which are said in his epistle

10 And as it would be very fatal to fall from these bright views and expectations into a state of such aggravated condemnation, *therefore my brethren, endeavour so much the more diligently to make your calling and your election sure* and firm, that having been called into the church of

10 Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure for

<sup>1</sup> *Calling and election sure* 1 Mr Breckin, the ingenious author of the Christian Warfare, hath taken pains to prove that calling and election alludes to the manner in which armies were raised, first by calling together all of a proper age to bear arms and then choosing out such as were reckoned most proper for that purpose. And he supposes, that making the calling, and election, his own, steadfast, was acting in such a manner that they might not be cashiered and disbanded, as unworthy a place in the army into which they had been led. He has indeed provided by a great number of learned quotations that this was the case in the Grecian armies.

and Rev xvii 14 may perhaps be a further illustration of it, as he will observe. But I rather think, that by this we are to determine our notion of the *calling and election*, and whoever should attempt to apply this idea to such phrases in the multitude of places, would find it utterly unsuitable. I have therefore taken in the idea which this agreeable writer suggests, as not entirely to drop others, which I think it extremely probable the apostle might have in his view. And it will certainly be a good sense, if we understand the exhortation, *Make it an assured thing to yourself*, that you are called and chosen of God.

ye do these things,  
ye shall never fall:

Christ, and chosen to such exalted external privileges, and such glorious hopes, you may not finally lose them; but may be assured upon the best grounds, that you are indeed effectually called by Divine grace, and chosen to the possession of life everlasting. And this important end will be secured, if you resolutely persist in your duty, according to the directions I have now given; *for if ye do these things ye shall never fall*; God will support you with communications of grace, suitable to any extraordinary trial, to which you may be called, till the whole is brought to a happy issue and conclusion. *For*

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

so an entrance shall be richly and abundantly administered unto you in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; you shall not only be secure of obtaining happiness there, but shall be received into it with circumstances of solemn pomp and distinguished honour; and those graces which adorned your profession here on earth, shall, as it were, attend you in a radiant train to those mansions of everlasting felicity and glory, which the Divine mercy shall then assign you, through Jesus Christ, to whom the praise of all is to be ascribed, and with whom you shall reign through the endless ages of eternity.

SECT.  
1.  
2 Peter  
1. 10

#### IMPROVEMENT.

WITH all humility let us adore the Divine goodness, in making us partakers of the like precious faith with that which he bestowed on the primitive believers. And let it often be considered in this comprehensive and edifying view, as terminating on the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, on that method of justification by him and his gospel which Divine grace hath found out and proposed. With thankfulness let us own the abundant provision made for us, of all things pertaining to life and godliness; and above all, let the exceeding rich and invaluable promises, contained in the gospel, be reviewed with sincere delight, and be esteemed as our securest and most important assurance. May they actually have all that efficacy they are suited and intended to have, to procure and secure our escape from the pollutions which are in the world through lust, and to advance the Divine resemblance in our souls. How glorious, and how lovely are the graces which are here recommended, as what we are with all diligence to add to our faith; courage,

Verse 1.

va-5, 7

248 *St. Peter would remind them of what they had been taught.*

1. and temperance, patience and godliness, brotherly kindness, and  
 2. universal charity! These are the genuine fruits of the knowledge  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ; these, while they honour him, and  
 3. adorn our profession, will be no less honourable and beneficial to  
 4. ourselves. Short-sighted indeed we are, if we perceive not on  
 5. the one hand, the happy and delightful consequences which they  
 6. will finally produce; and on the other, how utterly vain our bap-  
 7. tismal honours and engagements, and all external privileges of  
 8. church-communion, will be, if these vitais of Christianity are  
 9. wanting. In order to excite our indolent minds to pursue these  
 Divine graces, with a spirit in some measure proportionable to  
 their excellence, let us frequently reflect on our speedy removal  
 from this world and all its vanities; how soon we must enter up-  
 10. on eternity. O, how desirable then to enter on the kingdom of  
 Christ, to be honoured with an abundant entrance into everlast-  
 ing mansions, to be received as with a cordial welcome, to sail,  
 as it were, into that blessed harbour with a full gale of consol-  
 ation and joy! Be not deceived; God is not mocked; it is the in-  
 variable design of the gospel, to produce and advance our holi-  
 ness; it is the immutable constitution of the kingdom of Christ,  
 that without it no man shall be permitted to see the Lord. (Heb.  
 xii. 14.)

S E C T. II.

*The apostle, in the view of his own approaching dissolution, re-  
 minds his Christian brethren that their religion was firmly  
 founded, as it was attested both by the miraculous voice from  
 heaven, which declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and by the  
 divinely inspired prophecies, which also bore testimony to him  
 under that character. 2 Pet. I 12, to the end.*

2 PETER I. 12.

1. I HAVE been exhorting you to cultivate the  
 2. several graces of Christianity, and urging  
 3. this as necessary for the security of your eternal  
 4. salvation; therefore I will not neglect, always to  
 5. put you in mind of these things; though I am  
 6. aware, that you already know them, and are well  
 7. established by the instruction you have received  
 8. in the present truth, relating to the practice of  
 9. these virtues. But I account it right and ex-  
 10. pedient, yea, what by my office in the church of  
 11. Christ I owe to you, and my other brethren, as  
 12. long as I am in this tabernacle, and inhabit  
 13. this frail mortal body, from which, God only  
 knows how soon I may be dislodged, to stir you

2 PETER I. 12. WHEREFORE I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13 I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by

putting you in remembrance:

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

up by way of remembrance, and to endeavour to keep your hearts under as lively a sense of Divine things as I can: Knowing that all these opportunities of service are confined within very narrow limits; and that I must quickly put off this my tabernacle by death, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me, by an express prophecy, and that memorable action of his, when, just after his resurrection, he commanded me to follow him in token of my readiness to die for him, by the same kind of death which he suffered. (John xxi. 18, 19, 20.) But I will endeavour, to the utmost of my ability, while it pleases God to continue me among you; that you may have these things so familiar to your minds now, that ye may also every one of you have them in remembrance after my departure, when I shall have made my exit from the stage of mortality. For we have not been pursuing after a series of artfully devised fables, while we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; they were not fallaciously invented, nor rashly credited by us; but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty, and of the solemn pomp and grandeur with which he appeared at his transfiguration. For he then received from God the Father illustrious honour and glory; sublime honour was done him, and refulgent glory was shed round about him, when such a voice was sent forth to him from the magnificent glory of the Sſechinah, which then appeared so conspicuous and glorious, and made that ever-memorable proclamation, This is my well-beloved Son in whom I acquiesce, (Mat. xvii. 5.) and in whom my soul is perfectly well-pleased. And this voice which came down from heaven, we, his three distinguished friends, James and John, as well as myself, actually heard, when we were with him in the holy mount, which was, for the time, consecrated by the visible appearance of the Divine glory upon it. And we have a surer and firmer prophetic word, the evidence of which on the whole, is

15 More-over, I will endeavour, that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of

15 But I will endeavour, to the utmost of my ability, while it pleases God to continue me among you; that you may have these things so familiar to your minds now, that ye may also every one of you have them in remembrance after my departure, when I shall have made my exit from the stage of mortality.

16 For we have not been pursuing after a series of artfully devised fables, while we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; they were not fallaciously invented, nor rashly credited by us; but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty, and of the solemn pomp and grandeur with which he appeared at his transfiguration.

17 For he then received from God the Father illustrious honour and glory; sublime honour was done him, and refulgent glory was shed round about him, when such a voice was sent forth to him from the magnificent glory of the Sſechinah, which then appeared so conspicuous and glorious, and made that ever-memorable proclamation, This is my well-beloved Son in whom I acquiesce, (Mat. xvii. 5.) and in whom my soul is perfectly well-pleased.

18 And this voice which came down from heaven, we, his three distinguished friends, James and John, as well as myself, actually heard, when we were with him in the holy mount, which was, for the time, consecrated by the visible appearance of the Divine glory upon it.

19 And we have a surer and firmer prophetic word, the evidence of which on the whole, is

\* Surer prophetic word.] Some are of opinion that the apostle intended no comparison in this place, but that the comparative is used for the positive; so

that it only signifies a very sure prophetic word. As in Heb. xiii. 23, τεχνον is used for quickly. Acts xxv. 10, καλλιον for well. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 14; 2 Tim.



SECT.

II.

2 Pet.

I. 19.

far more extensive and important than that of any single miracle, how conspicuous soever; to which, therefore, ye do very well to adhere, and to take heed to its contents, as to a lamp shining in a dark, obscure, and gloomy place. Observe it therefore, and adhere to it, till the day dawn, and the morning star arise in your hearts, with resplendent beams, as the sure herald of an eternal day, whose sun shall no more go down, nor its moon withdraw itself:

- 20 Knowing this first, as a matter of chief importance; that no prophecy of scripture is of private impulse, or original, For prophecy was not brought of old, to the minds of those that uttered it, by the will of man: they could not work themselves up to the attainment of this extraordinary gift, nor divinely foretell what they themselves desired, and whenever they pleased; but holy men of God, whom he honoured with that important work, spake [as they were] borne on by the Holy Spirit; and they were only his organs, in declaring to the people what he was disposed to suggest to them.

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

1. 17, 18. And *μηνυσις* for the least, Mat. xi. 11; Luke vii. 28. Others assert, that the series of prophecies, when explained in the light of the New Testament, is a much clearer proof of Christ's being the Messiah, than any single miraculous fact, as this was. It is also debated, whether prophecy signifies the gift, so called among Christians, or the *written prophecies of the Old Testament*. But I think it cannot be doubted, that it refers to the latter, and is the same with what is called below, in the 20th verse, the *prophecy of scripture*, and is said to have come in old time, by the will of God.

<sup>b</sup> *Lamp shining in a dark place.* Bishop Chandler supposes, prophecy is so called, because it grows gradually brighter and brighter, as it approaches nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 23.

<sup>c</sup> *No prophecy of scripture is of private impulse.* So I render *ἐκ προφητείας*; and take it to signify, that men did not work themselves up into such agitations, as led them to utter the predictions and oracles

recorded. And this, I think, the original will very well bear, and the opposition justify. To interpret it in opposition to the right of private judgment in the interpretation of scripture, is quite foreign to the apostle's purpose, as well as extremely injurious to common sense. See Flein. Christology, Vol. I. p. 147. Dr. Clark and Mr. Baxter have understood this, as if the apostle had said, Scripture is not to be interpreted merely as speaking of this particular person of whom it literally speaks; but as having a farther sense, to which the expressions of the prophets were over ruled under the influence of the spirit, in reference to the gospel dispensation; in respect to which they sometimes were carried farther than they themselves were aware. Mr. Jefferies, (after Dr. Hammond,) observes that *ἐκ προφητείας*; originally signifies a sign or watch-word given to the racers when they were to start. See his Review of the controversy between the author of the grounds, &c. and his adversaries, p. 148.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY that uncertainty, that frailty and brevity of human life, which the ministers of Christ are frequently inculcating upon others, be seriously considered by themselves. Let them remember, that they must *quickly put off this tabernacle*, and be dismissed from their present state of service; and while they have opportunity therefore, let them stir up the minds of the people committed to their charge, *by way of remembrance*, and give diligence to make such impressions upon their hearts, that when they themselves are laid down in the silence of the grave, and sleeping among the clods of the valley, by the recollection and improvement of the lessons they taught, survivors may be quickened in their preparation to quit their dissolving tabernacles likewise, and to follow their pious leaders into the joy of their Lord.

It must undoubtedly yield us an inconceivable satisfaction as Christians, that we *have not followed cunningly devised fables*; that the persons on whose testimony we rely as an authentic evidence to the truth of our holy religion, were eye-witnesses of the illustrious facts on which it is founded; and particularly, that important oracle, the voice from heaven, by which the true and living God declared Jesus of Nazareth to be his well-beloved Son, and recommended him to the obedient regard of all who reverence his own authority, was, on the mount of transfiguration, distinctly heard by Peter, James, and John; who at the same time were eye-witnesses of his glory. Yet are we bound to acknowledge the Divine oracles of the Old Testament, and the numerous and various prophecies they contain, to be to us a superior, a more sure and incontestible evidence: let us therefore take heed to it, as a glorious light to our feet, and lamp to our paths. And let what is particularly said of the ancient prophets recommend to our regard the whole sacred volume; namely, that it was not written by private impulse, but by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Let us receive it with the profoundest humility, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed and in truth the word of God, which is able to make us wise unto salvation; and let us follow its sacred illumination, till at length it conduct us to the dawning of an eternal day, and to the rising of that bright and morning star, which will shine out hereafter with the full glory of the Sun of righteousness.

## S E C T. III

*The apostle cautions Christians against false teachers: mentioning the judgments which God executed upon the fallen angels, on the old world, and on Sodom, and the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, as considerations which should, on the one hand, terrify the ungodly, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of good men. 2 Peter II. 1—9.*

## 2 Peter II. 1

SECT.  
III  
Peter  
II. 1

**I** HAVE observed to you that it was by a Divine impulse that the prophets delivered and wrote their predictions in former times; *but* they were not always regarded in a becoming manner, for *there were also false prophets among the people*<sup>a</sup> of the Jews, *as there shall also be among you*<sup>b</sup> the disciples of a greater Master than Moses, *false teachers, who will make parties among you, and privately introduce pernicious and destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought and redeemed them*, as those false prophets denied the God who had redeemed Israel from its bondage and misery, but they will at last be found in the same dreadful circumstances, *bringing upon themselves their swift destruction. And yet many will persist to follow their pernicious courses, by means of whom the way of truth, the cause of genuine and uncorrupted Christianity, will by many others be blasphemed* as if the errors and madness of those members who are corrupted, were to be charged

2 PETER II. 1  
BUT there were also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

<sup>a</sup> *There were also false prophets among the people* [Dr. Sherlock, (the late bishop of London) has observed in his first dissertation, at the end of his discourses on prophecy, that there is a sensible difference, not so much between the first and second epistles of Peter, as between this second chapter, when compared with the first and third. This chapter abounds in pompous words and expressions. It is a description of false teachers and seems to be extracted from some Jewish writer, who had given a description of the false prophets, either those of his own time, or those who had lived before him. This remark accounts for the great resemblance between this chapter and the epistle of

Jude, as was observed in the Introduction. He supposes it might be translated, or translated by them, from some Jewish Hebrew book that remained among them. See the epistle of Jude, note c.

<sup>b</sup> *As there shall also be among you* [Hence Mr. Mede, I think somewhat precariously, infers a similitude between the errors propagated by the false prophets among the Jews, and those which were to overrun the Christian church, and instances in image-worship, and the worship of departed saints and heroes, customary in the church of Rome. Mede in loc. Dr. Whitby applies all these things to the Nicolaitans, and Gnostics who were a branch of them.]

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not

\* For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

\* Does not slumber.] Mr. Blackwall observes, that this is a most beautiful figure, representing the vengeance that shall destroy such incorrigible sinners, as an angel of judgment pursuing them upon the wing, continually approaching nearer and nearer, and in the mean time keeping a watchful eye upon them, that he may at length discharge an unerring blow. See his Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 297.

4 Did not spare the angels, &c.] Some have imagined this to be an imperfect sentence: I think it complete in the 9th verse. But as the length of the sentence is so necessarily increased, by such a method of paraphrasing as I have chosen, (though brought into the narrowest limits, which were judged consistent with answering the end,) I have thought it proper here, and in many other instances, to divide what, in the original, makes one sentence, into several; else I must have left many passages of the sacred writings far more intricate than I found them.

\* Cast [them] down to hell.] Mr. Mede would translate the words, When God had condemned the angels that sinned to the punishment of hell, he delivered them into chains to be reserved to judgment. I

on those who are not infected with their disorders, or the vices of a few, were to be imputed to all. And as for the false teachers I mention, they will order both their teaching and their conduct by views and maxims of covetousness, and with deceitful words will make merchandise of you, trafficking as it were for your immortal souls. These are wretches, whose judgment for a long time delays not, but advances apace; and their destruction does not slumber, how fondly soever they may dream of escaping it. But if they consider the numerous examples God has already given of his righteous indignation, they must certainly take the alarm; For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but having cast [them] down from heaven and sunk them to the abyss of hell, delivered [them] to be reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great and terrible day of account; we may from hence reasonably conclude, that he will find out a proper season to punish wicked men, the confederates and instruments of those rebellious spirits.

cannot but think that the word *ταφωρα* is illustrated by the description given of Tartarus in Homer, (Iliad 9, l. 13—15), as a deep gulph under the earth, where there are iron gates, and a brazen entrance. It is derived from a word expressive of terror, and signifies the doleful prison in which wicked spirits are reserved, till they should be brought out to public condemnation and execution.

[In chains of darkness.] It has been queried, how the confinement of these unhappy spirits in chains of darkness, is consistent with their wandering up and down in the air, and upon earth. I think we are to answer, not by saying, that the darkness is moral, or that the light is disagreeable to them, as some have suggested, (compare Reynold's Inquiry concerning the Angelic World, Query xxx. p. 191.), but rather, that a general confinement may be reconcilable with some degree of liberty, yet still liable to restraint, as God shall see fit. Compare Luke viii. 31; Rev. ix. 1. 3. And this air, over which they seem indeed to have some power sometimes granted them, (Eph. ii. 2.) is to be sure darkness, when compared with the light in which they originally dwell.

SECT.

III.

2 Peter

II. 5.

And indeed the history of mankind furnishes us with many awful instances of this kind: and one, in which almost the whole human species was made the monument of Divine displeasure; for when God had been long insulted and provoked by their continued wickedness, we know that he spared not the inhabitants of the old antediluvian world. Nevertheless, it is worth our while at the same time to observe the favourable manner in which God interposed amidst the general ruin, for the preservation of the only good man that remained; for he kept Noah, the eighth [person, &] who was a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, who were with him in the ark, when he brought the irresistible destruction of the universal deluge upon the whole world of the ungodly, and destroyed all the impious wretches who had derided the admonitions of that faithful patriarch.

5 And spared not the old world; but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And in a succeeding age, when the inhabitants of those places were sunk into the lowest degeneracy, he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the most dreadful destruction, reducing them to ashes by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; setting [them] as an example and pattern of that final vengeance he will bring on those sinners who should afterwards be ungodly, that they might learn their own condemnation and misery from the memorials of the destruction of those once noble, pleasant, and flourishing cities of the plain.

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And by the miraculous interposition of his pro-

7 And delivered just

« The eighth [person] a preacher of righteousness. ] Bishop Pearson would render this clause, *Noah the eighth preacher of righteousness*; supposing, that Enos was the first, (Gen. iv. 26,) from whom Noah was the eighth; that all the intermediate persons bore the same office, and that Christ preached by them all. 1 Pet. iii. 19. Pears. on the Creed, p. 113. To which Bishop Cumberland assents, supposing God had a continued succession of extraordinary persons in the patriarchal church. Cumb. on Gen. p. 49. But I think it certain, that Enos could not be the first preacher of righteousness.

was in a succession of ages, fitted to perform that office in the first world, as Noah was in the second; and what excel-

lent instructions both might give, Dr. Winder has ingeniously represented. Winder's History of Knowledge, Vol. I. p. 17. &c. p. 81-92. Bishop Pearson adds, that if we are not disposed to refer *οὐδὲν ἐκ τῶν προφῶν*, and translate it, *the eighth preacher of righteousness*, it may be understood as denoting not the order in which Noah was ranked, but merely the number of persons that were with him, *Noah with seven others*, or *Noah one of eight*; and accordingly, I have determined it in this sense in the paraphrase. The Bishop hath produced several passages in the Greek classics in support of this sense: see word; and others may be given in plucius. Compare also 1 Pet.

Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds:)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

vidence, he rescued righteous Lot, who was so long grieved and afflicted by the lascivious conversation of these lawless men. For that righteous man, while he dwelt among them, seeing and hearing from day to day, the instances of their profligate and abandoned wickedness, tormented his upright soul by [those] unlawful and scandalous works; whose cry came up at length to heaven, and brought down upon them this flaming destruction. And thus, on the whole, 9 we discern in this memorable example; that on the one hand, *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation* and danger, and on the other, *to reserve the unrighteous to the day of judgment to be punished* with a severity becoming their guilt and wickedness.

SECT.

III.

2 Peter

II. 8

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is no church so pure, but some false members, and even false teachers, may insinuate themselves into it; yet it is our duty to watch and pray, that the churches to which we respectively belong, may be guarded against their pernicious insinuations, and especially against the destructive heresies of those who deny the Lord who bought them. As we regard the edification of the church, and the salvation of our own precious and immortal souls, let us guard against whatever may justly deserve such an imputation as this. *Woe be to those teachers who are actuated with a covetous spirit, who teach things which they ought not for the sake of filthy lucre, and make merchandise of the souls of their hearers!* How swiftly does their damnation approach, though they perceive not the gradations by which it advances; and with what irresistible terror will it at length overwhelm them!

Verse

That our hearts may be preserved under an awful impression of the Divine judgments, let us often meditate on those displays of them of which the scripture informs us. And let us in particular, reflect on the fall of the apostate angels, who were for their first offence precipitated from heaven, and reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day; and while we contemplate this awful dispensation, let us adore that distinguishing grace and compassion which laid hold on apostate man, and provided an all-sufficient Saviour for him. Let us call to remembrance the dissolution of the old world by a deluge of water, and the tremendous destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven; and let us fear that God, who can at pleasure break open the fountains of the great deep, and open the win-

5, 6

256 *But they shall be chiefly punished who are unclean, &c.*

SECT. dows of heaven, and emit from these his various magazines, deluges of water, or torrents of burning sulphur, to execute his vengeance. Who can flee from his pursuing hand? or who can be secure and happy but under his almighty protection? Yet awful as the terrors of his indignation are, *his eyes are upon the* Verse 7, 8 *righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.* What a noble support and encouragement may it therefore be to the small remnant, *who from day to day are vowing their righteous souls at the ungodly deeds of the wicked among whom they dwell,* to reflect on the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, from that general destruction with which they were surrounded. A more perfect and complete deliverance will be at length accomplished for all the faithful servants of God, and there will be no possibility of doubting any more his ability, or his willingness to rescue them from every evil; for he will make the day of his vengeance on his enemies, a day of complete and everlasting salvation to his saints. And the Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that important day.

SECT. IV.

*The apostle describes in very emphatical terms, the infamous character of some ungodly and seducing teachers, who were crept into the Christian church; and warns the Christian converts of the danger of their being perverted by them, and then of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. 2 Pet. II. 10.—22.*

2 PETER II. 10.

SECT. IV.

2 Peter II. 10.

I HAVE been just mentioning the Divine vengeance which will be poured out on audacious and impenitent sinners; but I would especially be understood to intend *those who go after strange flesh, in the lust of uncleanness;* for they are particularly detestable in the eye of God, and the crimes they commit so much resemble that of Sodom, that it is the less to be wondered if they share in its punishment: and with them I also comprehend those who *despise dominion,* of which there are many among the licentious wretches before described, *daring and self-willed,* uncontrollable in their own ways, and ready to face and withstand any opposition in the prosecution of them; *they fear not to speak evil of those* 11 *who possess the highest dignities: Whereas the angels, even those who are greater in strength and power than the rest of those glorious beings,*

2 PETER II. 10.

BUT chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might,

bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 2 Peter 11. 11.

12 But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 12

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you; 13

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and

\* *Irrational animals.*] Dr. Whitby would render this, *But these are as natural brute beasts*; referring it to their promiscuous exercise of lust. And indeed it is evident, it must be explained as a general assertion, relating to some violence of temper; as no sin of the tongue, which is immediately afterwards spoken of, could be the resemblance of a brute. I may refer to their running headlong into extreme danger; which this licentious manner of speech, especially when attacking the characters of governors, might very naturally expose them to.

b *Destroyed in their corruption.*] The original phrase is *iv tē phorē autōn katalēgontes*, and some would render it, *are destroyed by destruction*, that is, certainly, or utterly destroyed. Compare Cradock's Apostolical History, p. 117. They boasted of being beyond the power of corruption and punishment, but are lost in both together.

c *Living luxuriously, &c.*] This is so good and proper a sense, that one is not

tempted to wish the establishing of the reading of *anais*, for *anais*, which some have proposed, and so explain it of the riot of those pretended love-feasts, into which indeed it is not impossible that luxury might soon come, when persons of such a character were concerned in them; and probably, that was the occasion of laying them aside.

d *Banqueting with you.*] It is not to be thought that luxury could be introduced into those feasts, which they celebrated with the church, without detecting their own characters; and therefore I think it most reasonable to consider their luxury as practised elsewhere; and to refer this *banqueting*, of which the apostle speaks, to their attending the sacred banquet of the Lord's supper, as a cover for their licentiousness.

e *Having eyes full of adultery.* *ὀφθαλμοὶ—μὲν ὡς μοιχεύουσιν.*] There is a prodigious strength in this expression; it properly signifies their having an *adulterous* continually before their eyes.



SECT. from sin, even when the powers of animal nature are exhausted; but by their words and gestures they endeavour to fan the flame; *ensnaring unstable souls* by their artful addresses, and having their heart continually exercised in avaricious schemes; on all which accounts they are the children of a curse, and they shall find that in the end it will indeed fall heavy upon them.

15 For, deserting the straight and upright way of truth and integrity, they have wandered in dangerous and destructive paths, following in the way of that infamous person Balaam, [the son] of Bosor,<sup>1</sup> who so loved the wages of unrighteousness, that he was willing to sacrifice

16 every other interest to obtain them. But he received, in a very extraordinary manner, the reproof of his transgression; for the dumb beast on which he rode, speaking with the voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet, when he would have pressed on to his own destruction.

17 These, notwithstanding all their boasted pretensions, are fountains without water; they are clouds agitated by a whirlwind, easily yielding to every wind of persecution or temptation, and themselves big with storms and tempests: but after all their turbulence and mischief, they will be found in the number of those to whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever, even the judgment of eternal darkness and despair.

18 They sometimes indeed affect sublime strains of language, which are often void of any real meaning, and speaking swelling [words] of vanity,<sup>2</sup> they ensnare in the lusts of the flesh, which they practise and promote in all variety of lasciviousness, those who were, so far as we can judge by their external behaviour, quite escaped<sup>3</sup> from

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness:

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped

<sup>1</sup> Balaam [the son] of Bosor. There is one manuscript which reads Beor, and this reading is confirmed by the Syriac version, Mr. Ainsworth and Dr. Lightfoot suppose, that the apostle, in writing Bosor for Beor, used the Chaldean dialect, as he writ in the neighbourhood of Babylon. See Ainsworth on Num. xxii. 5; and Dr. Lightfoot's Addenda to his Horæ Hebraicæ, on 1 Cor. xiv. cap. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Swelling words of vanity. It is observed, that here, and in many other

places, these heretical teachers are represented as seducing their followers, not by the power of miracles, but by the arts of address,

<sup>3</sup> Quite escaped, &c.] The words *ἐκλυτο ἀναρπαγίας*, which is the received reading, certainly signify, those who were thoroughly or entirely escaped. But the Alexandrian reading *ἐκλυτο*, which some other copies in some degree imitate, where they do not entirely follow, leaves a strong suspicion on my mind, that the

from them who live in error.

them that have their conversation in error, and they draw back into apostacy some, who appeared to have set their faces in good earnest towards the kingdom of heaven; by which means they become partakers in the guilt of that aggravated condemnation and ruin, which these deluded and unhappy persons bring upon themselves. For promising them liberty, they are so far from performing their engagements, that they are themselves the despicable slaves of corruption, and have not power and spirit enough to extricate themselves out of that infamous bondage; for by whomsoever any one is defeated and conquered, by him he is of course also enslaved; and it is too evident to admit of dispute, that these wretched men are continually conquered by sin.

sect. 17.  
2. Pet. 2. 18.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

And they ought certainly to be reckoned among the most miserable of mankind; for if, having escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled and subdued by them again, caught as it were, in their nets, and so lying at their mercy to be wounded and destroyed by them, their last state is certainly much worse than the first:

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness at all, than having known [it] and professed a desire and resolution of walking in it, to have turned aside from the holy commandment delivered to them; for by this means their guilt is so much the more aggravated; their conduct is the more pernicious to others, and consequently to themselves.

22 But it is hap-

But indeed, when the matter comes thoroughly to be considered, it will appear, that under all the external appearances of reformation, there

apostle might intend those who had almost escaped. I have therefore taken a medium, and retaining the usual reading in the version, have paraphrased the words in what I apprehend the most natural sense, with some regard to the other copies.

[From the holy commandment.] The learned Dr. Sherlock, the late bishop of London, interprets this of some directions drawn up by the apostles, relating to the

conduct which Christians should maintain with regard to these seducing teachers they are here cautioned against. See his Discourses on Prophecy, Disc. I. p. 124. It is however, certain, that it is capable of a larger interpretation, as many holy commandments remain upon record in the New Testament, which might guard them against the evils referred to in the preceding discourse.

SECT. was still an evil nature and principle remaining, which at length prevailed; so that *it is happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog [is] returned to gorge up his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed from the filthiness she had before contracted, having still the same unclean nature prevailing, is returned to wallow in the mire, and so makes herself as filthy as she had ever been before.* (Compare Prov. xxvi. 11.)

IV.  
2 Peter II. 22.

opened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 13 It is indeed matter of grievous lamentation, that such wretches as those who are here described, should be any where found in the Christian church. Let us be the less surprised, if any such spots and blemishes are discovered among us, on whom the ends of the world are come; but let the licentious character, here drawn, be noted with a just abhorrence, that if any such persons 12 are found, they may with becoming indignation be put away. Many there are, who seem to be as irrational and ravenous as 14 brute beasts, and are far more pernicious to society, than the race of savage or poisonous animals. They are indeed children of a curse, and they will inherit the curse, who thus contrive to make their lives one scene of iniquity, whose eyes, and lips, declare more wickedness in their hearts, than they have power to execute. But it should be remembered, they are accountable to God, not only for all they do, but for all they desire and wish 15, 16 to do; and they are incessantly aggravating that terrible account. These disciples of Balaam will surely receive his reward; those 17 dark clouds will quickly, if they continue thus to obscure with their crimes the horizon in which they ought to shine as stars, be doomed to blackness of darkness for ever. May persons of 18 such a character, how specious soever the form which they wear, be universally detected and disgraced; may none of their swelling words of vanity, entice and ensnare those who appear just escaping from the delusions of error, and the fetters of vice; and 19 may none permit themselves to be seduced by promises of liberty, from such mean and miserable slaves of corruption.

Finally, let us learn, by the awful conclusion of this chapter, 20 to guard against all temptations to apostasy; may we never, after 21 having long escaped the pollutions of the world, be entangled again, and overcome by them. *Better, far better, would it have been for us, not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment; our lust end, in this case, would be worse than the beginning; and those expressive similes, taken from such loathsome and detestable*

animals, would not be sufficient to paint out the degree, in which we should ourselves be loathsome and odious, in the sight of that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon evil, (Habak. i. 13.) May we therefore, with the righteous hold on our way; and taking care to preserve the cleanness of our hands and hearts, may we daily wax stronger and stronger, (Job xvii. 9;) and shine with an increasing lustre; for the path of the just should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.)

## SECT. V.

That they might be effectually guarded against the artifices of those who seoff at religion, or lie in wait to deceive, the apostle directs them to adhere closely and steadily to the holy scriptures; and represents to them the absolute certainty, and awful manner, of the destruction of this world; concluding with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. 2 Pet. III. throughout.

2 PETER III. 1.

**T**HIS second epistle beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 PETER III. 1.

**T**HIS second epistle I now write to you, my dearly beloved brethren, with the same purpose with which I wrote the former; in [both] which, I stir up your sincere and upright minds, for such I hope they indeed are, in the remembrance of those glorious principles of our holy religion, which may be of the greatest importance to your spiritual improvement. For it is my ardent desire, that in order to your advancement in true religion, you may be mindful of the words which were spoken long before our own time, by the holy prophets who lived in remote ages; and also of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour<sup>b</sup>, who hath

SECT. V.  
2 Peter III. 1.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophet, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

\* The second epistle.] Archbishop Tillotson seems to think, this last chapter to be a distinct epistle by itself. See his Works, Vol. II. p. 718. Grotius imagines, that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and expresses the triumph of profane men, when they saw that Christ did not come to judgment, as it was expected he would then do. He infers from hence, that this epistle was written not by Simon Peter the apostle, but some other Simon. But I confess, I see no reason at all for any such conclusion;

nor do I perceive these scoffers were then actually come, but only predicted. The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Some translate this clause, The commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, and would from hence infer, that Simon, who wrote this epistle was not an apostle himself; but the version I have given, is most agreeable to the order of the original words. The learned author, whom I mentioned above, (sect. IV. note 2) observes, that the apostolic constitutions affirm, there was a

## 262 To guard them against the scoffers at God's judgments.

1. *condescended by our instrumentality, to send you messages upon which your salvation evidently depends; a method which Divine wisdom and love hath pitched upon to accomplish this important and desirable end;* *Knowing this*

2 Peter  
III. 2.

3 *first, as what is most necessary to be remembered and considered, that in the last days, which are now approaching apace, there shall come profane mockers, walking in a most scandalous and licentious manner, according to the impulse of their own ungoverned lusts and appetites:*

4 *And they shall deride the hope of the faithful followers of Christ, saying, "Where is the boasted promise and declaration of his coming, in which these silly deluded creatures reposed so great a confidence? For since the fathers of former ages are fallen asleep, all things remain just in the same state and situation as [they were] from the beginning of the creation; the times and seasons revolve as they did before, and there is no such marvellous interposition of this Jesus, as to turn the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, to cause the stars to fall from heaven, to bring down vengeance and destruction on all his enemies, and to confer an ample reward on his servants." But this they willingly*

5 *are ignorant of, and they continue ignorant of it through affectation, plain and obvious as it is from the word of God, that all nature is in his hand, and at his disposal, and that he can in whatsoever time and manner he pleases, change and overthrow its universal system; they know and consider not, that by the almighty and ever-efficacious word of God, the heavens, with all their host, were produced of old, and the earth submitting from the water, with which the mass of it was*

3 *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.*

4 *2nd saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

5 *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of*

council of the apostles called on occasion of these teachers, when St. Peter guards against, and all that in common delivered this advice, which he has admonished the Christian converts to regard.

[Mockers.] Archbishop Tillotson explains this of the Carpoetrans, a large sect of the Gnostics, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, and appeared quickly after the

writing this epistle. See Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 711.

\* *Since the fathers are fallen asleep.* [Mr. Grove would render it, for except that the fathers are fallen asleep; that is, That the inhabitants of the world are continually changing, and new generations rising instead of the old, all other things continue as they were. See Grove's Addit. Posthum. Sermon. Vol. I. p. 200,

the water, and in the *water*, at first covered; till by the Divine command, it emerged from it, and the liquid element flowed to its appointed channel; and God ordained that the earth should be nourished and supported by *water*, which is the life of the vegetable creation. Yet that very element from which it

6 Whereby the world that then was, being over-flowed with water, perished.

But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto (us) against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men

had its original and support, became at length by Divine appointment, the means of its destruction; *whereby*,<sup>e</sup> that is, in consequence of which constitution of things, under a different direction and agency of God, *the world that then was, being deluged with an irresistible inundation of water, perished*, and every thing upon the face of it was destroyed; none of the human race, or rather terrestrial animals surviving, but those who, by God's special providence, were preserved in the ark. It appears from 7 hence credible in reason, as well as certain from Divine revelation, that the earth may be dissolved, and its inhabitants removed. But we know that God has determined to effect this great revolution, by a method far different from that of the former, for *the heavens and the earth, which now [exist] are treasured up*, as it were, by the same word, and guarded from all danger of a second deluge of water, *being kept to be dissolved by a deluge of fire, on the day which God has appointed for the display of his righteousness at the universal judgment, and for the destruction of ungodly men*, who, alas! so generally abound, and towards whom his patience has been so long exercised. This is indeed in the 8 course of Divine Providence long delayed; but

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day

*let not this one thing be hid from you, my dearly beloved, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; all the divisions of our time are so absolutely disproportionate to his eternity, that the difference between one and another of them seems to be lost in his presence; and a vengeance certainly*

\* *Whereby* ] Very possibly *by* refers to *supra*, the heavens, mentioned above, and may relate to the windows of heaven being opened, and pouring forth upon the earth a destructive deluge of water [One day is a thousand years.] This many have observed, a proverbial expression among the Jews, to signify, that no finite duration bears any proportion to the eternity of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it in his discourse on the slowness of the divine vengeance.

1 74 many have observed, a proverbial expression among the Jews, to signify, that no finite duration bears any proportion to the eternity of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it in his discourse on the slowness of the divine vengeance.

# 264 *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night;*

sect. to be inflicted after a thousand years, is nearer in his estimation, than that which is to be executed to-morrow is in ours. And indeed as

1 Peter 4.9. *The Lord is not slow concerning the accomplishment of his promise to his people, who look for this complete deliverance, as some under the infirmities of their impatience, may be ready to count [it] sloveness: but good reasons are to be assigned for it, most consistent with the perfections of the Divine nature, especially this, That he is long-suffering towards us, and endures in great compassion, as not willing that any should perish, but that all should come over to repentance, and thereby to salvation; to which, by the exercise of this patience, he seems tenderly and graciously to invite the worst and most unworthy of man-*

10 kind. But at length the day of patience will have its period, and this day of retribution will come suddenly and irresistibly; yes, sirs, *the day of the Lord's will come as a thief in the night*, (Mat. xxiv. 43.) will break in upon men, when they least expect it, with a terrible alarm; even that day, *in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements, of which this goodly frame of nature, is composed, being set on fire, shall be dissolved, and the earth and all its works, shall be burnt up*, so that none of the ornaments of nature, or of art, shall any longer continue; but the whole shall be one undistinguished heap of smoking desolation. O,

11 therefore, be persuaded to lay this to heart, and seriously and daily reflect with yourselves, *since all these things which are now so ready to engross your thoughts and your affection, shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in*

12 the exercise of *holy conversation and piety*. We, Christians, I say, who have the express revelation

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness;) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for,

[The day of the Lord.] It has always appeared surprising to me, that Dr. Hammond should refer this context to the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Ray has most solidly confuted him at large, in his three Discourses p. 244, 245, urging the opposition between the deluge, and the day here spoken of in the preceding verses, and that a long delay was intimated in the

words *thousand years*; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem happened, at farthest, about twenty years after the writing of this epistle. *The day of judgment of ungodly men* mentioned ver. 7, does also, I think, afford a sufficient answer to this hypothesis; as well as the mention of a *new heaven and earth*, as what was immediately to succeed this important scene.

and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless, we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless;

15 And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

of these things, how should we be affected with them, *looking for, and as it were, hastening on* with our ardent wishes, *the coming of the day of God*, though it be attended with so much terror, though it be the day in which the heavens being on fire, as I said, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Yet still, through the Divine grace, it is a day that we have reason, not only to wish, but even to long for, as we, according to the tenor of his unfailling promise, look for a glorious and transporting change, which will then commence, for new heavens, and a new earth, new and everlasting abodes, which Divine mercy will then open to our raptured view, into which it will conduct us, and in which righteousness, perfect holiness and felicity, dwelleth. Therefore, my beloved, bearing these great truths in your minds, give up your whole souls to their influence, and expecting these things, these most awful and important scenes, endeavour with the utmost diligence, that ye may be found by him, by your great Lord, who will preside over even this dissolving world in peace, and may be presented spotless and blameless before him. And while 15

this triumphant season is delayed, account the long-suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ to proceed, as it really does, not from the least defect of power, or forgetfulness of his promise, but from his gracious desire to promote the salvation of his people, and to afford to all who are willing to embrace it, an opportunity of securing this final and everlasting deliverance; as also our beloved brother Paul, whom I am far from honouring the less on account of his being sent to the Gentiles, according to the wisdom given to him by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has written. The passage to which, I refer, is in a letter immediately directed to the

[Hastening on, &c.] This is the emphasis of the original expression, according to the version of Erasmus Schmidius, supported by several pertinent quotations from the classics, by Euphélius, (Annot. ex Polyb. and ex Herod. in loc.) and by Mr. Blackwall (Sac. Clav. V. l. II. p. 180)

[Our brother Paul] It is very evident from hence, not only that St. Peter maintained a reverend regard for Paul, and looked upon him as a brother, but also that he had seen his epistle before he wrote this



ACT. Romans, but it may be considered as designed  
7. for you,<sup>1</sup> and for the general use of all Christians:

I mean that in which he expressly testifies, that  
the goodness of God leadeth to repentance—

16 (Rom ii 4) *As also in all [his] other epistles;*

*speaking in them of such persons as I have now*

*described, for undoubtedly the words are pec-*

*uliarly applicable to them. In which writings of*

*his, and particularly in that from whence these*

*words are taken, there are some things hard to*

*be understood,<sup>1</sup> which the unteachable and un-*

*stable to wrest, as they also do other*

*scriptures, whether belonging to the Old Testa-*

*ment or the New, to their own destruction,*

*putting such perverse interpretations upon*

*them, with some show or colour of reason,*

*as no candid man would on the whole have*

*thought of, or will admit. You therefore,*

*dearly beloved, knowing [these things] before,*

*knowing especially, in how awful a man-*

*ner the scene will close, and what dread-*

*ful vengeance will be executed on all wicked*

*men, and especially on those that pollute the*

16 As also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing know these things

\* *Interpretation* ] Lord Barrington is of opinion that it refers to some part not now extant, which St Paul wrote to the *prophets*, *imagining* the converting and edifying them to have been a mixed piece partly managed by the apostle & of the circumcision, and partly by the office of the uncircumcision. *Miscell. Sacra*, Fvs II p. 110. But as I think the whole foundation of this distinction groundless, I look upon this passage as a very instructive admonition to all Christians, to consider St Paul, and the other apostles, as writing to them in their epistle, so far as a similarity of circumstances would admit. In which view it is of infinite importance that we should consider them as written to us, in like manner as St Peter tells us, on the ancient prophets considered the great subjects of which these epistles treat as relating to them. 1 Pet i 12

<sup>1</sup> *Some things hard to be understood* ] Some by it is understood not the epistles of Paul but the things spoken of. But as these are plainly mentioned as spoken of in the scriptures, this interpretation will still leave us under a necessity of studying the perspicuity of some part of scripture. As to mention that there are several manuscript of

considerable authority which read: a which expressly refers to St Paul's epistles—it is remarkable that Borel explains this of the ninth chapter of the Romans, in which there are some things which seem to be contrary to the sufficiency of all, and which are very liable to be perniciously wrested. See Lacl. Apol p. 152. It is by many writers justly remarked, that the difficulty is said to affect, chiefly *apostolic* and *prophe-<sup>1</sup>* *teaching*, *unteachable* and *unsteady* men, whose prejudices dispose them for admitting the truth, or whose levity prevents their due solicitude to retain it, but not persons of *humble teachable* mind, who are pursuing and maintaining the truth. And the remedy prescribed, is *not laying aside* the scriptures on account of their obscurity, as some would persuade us to do, but a concern to grow in grace, &c. (ver 13). The expression *epistles*, *or* *oracles*, as on the rack, plainly implies, that violence is done, by these bad men, to some passages of scripture, to make them speak an unnatural sense which may answer their own purposes. And truly he must know little of the history of theological controversies, who hath not observed many deplorable instances of this

fore, beware; lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. *18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

church of Christ, into which they have professed to enter; *guard [yourselves,] that ye may not, being entangled with the error of the ungodly, fall from your own steadfastness,* which by God's assistance you have hitherto retained. *But grow in grace,* more and more, advancing from one stage of practical religion to another, *and increasing daily in the knowledge of our Divine Lord and almighty and all gracious Saviour, Jesus Christ: to him [be] glory throughout all the churches, and all the creation of God, both now and for ever. Amen.*

# IMPROVEMENT.

WHO is there, that can be so sluggish and lethargic, as not to be in some measure awakened and alarmed by the awful views here given, of the dissolution, as well as the creation of the world, by the word of God? Who must not even tremble, when he turns his eye back to the dreadful ruin brought on it by the universal deluge; when that element, which had been, and is, the means and instrument of life to the whole animal creation, at the Divine signal, became the means and instrument of death? Who can be unaffected, when he seriously reflects on the heavens passing away with a great noise? on the elements melting with fervent heat? on the burning up the earth, and all things therein? Let scoffers who walk after their own lusts, madly deride the promise of his coming; let them deliver over their taunts and insults to each other, through the succession of a thousand years: were his coming at the distance of ten thousand generations, or a yet remoter distance, they who have any just impression on their minds, of the eternity of God, or the immortality of the human soul, would discern the important day of final retribution, as immediate and present to their view. While they scoff and deride the tremendous reality, let us hear the declaration of its approach with the profoundest attention; and let our souls enter deeply into the alarming and important reflection. If indeed we look for such great things as these, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot or blemish? And if we desire this blessedness, (as who can fail earnestly to desire it, who hath a firm and steady persuasion of its reality,) can we possibly live in tolerable composure, if we have little or no reason to conclude that we shall obtain an interest and share in it? Let us be all concerned that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; by the knowledge of whom every grace will be greatly revived and strengthened. On these lively and

important subjects of meditation let our thoughts frequently dwell, and let us endeavour that the sentiments which result from them, may be wrought into our hearts, and controul our lives.

Verse 15, 16 And as for those hard sayings, which occur, either in St Peter or St. Paul, or any other sacred and inspired writer, let us neither wrest and torture them to our own mischief and destruction, nor be so curiously and sedulously diving into their meaning, as to neglect these, and the like plain and serious admonitions, this *sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.* May all the powers of our souls be exerted in securing their deliverance from wrath to come, that so *the patience of God, and his long-suffering towards us,* may indeed prove salvation. And if that be indeed the case, the light of heaven will mightily illustrate those mysteries both of the Divine word and Providence, which our weak and defective organs of vision have not enabled us clearly to discern and unfold, while by the comparatively fainter, though in itself glorious, light of revelation, we are guided through this dark and gloomy valley.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND  
CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THE  
FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION;



A

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

### \* PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE FIRST

## CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE Apostle John, to whom the unanimous suffrage of the ancients hath ascribed this epistle, is the same with John the *evangelist*, who is said to have written his gospel in extreme *old age*; and, as Eusebius informs us, with a view to record some particulars concerning our blessed Lord, which had been omitted by the other evangelists, though he explicitly acknowledged the truth of their history, as far as it went, and confirmed it by his own testimony. (See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. xxiv.) According to the title of this epistle in the old Italic version, and the account which is given us by St. Austin and others, it was written to the Christian converts in Parthia, which was a part of the Upper Asia. But in the opinion of the learned Dr. Mill, (see his Prolegom. p. 18, § 150. Edit. Kuster,) this notion had its sole original from a tradition, that the apostle John had preached the gospel in that country; whereas, if we may credit the report mentioned by Eusebius, it was St. Thomas who exercised his apostolical office among the Parthians. Others have con-  
jec

tured, from some passages in this epistle, in which the persons, whom St John addresses, are represented, as *having known Christ from the beginning*, (see chap. ii. 13, 14, and other places,) that he writes only to the Jewish Christians, who inhabited Judea and Galilee. But I very much question, whether these expressions will support the stress which hath been laid upon them, and accordingly, in my paraphrase I have assigned them a more general interpretation.

And as we find nothing but conjecture and uncertainty concerning the persons to whom this epistle was addressed, so there is very little precision to be expected, in our inquiries concerning the time when it was written. From the apostle's saying, chap. ii. 18, *It is now the last time*; and chap. iv. 1, that *many false prophets are gone out into the world*, compared with Mat. xxiv. 24, where this is mentioned as a sign of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth, some have indeed inferred this epistle was written a very short time before the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas, several others (and in particular Dr Mill,) are of opinion its date should be assigned to the year 91, or 92 — It was probably written before the apocalypse, as I shall have occasion to observe hereafter, in sect iv. note<sup>b</sup>.

In the style of this apostle there is a remarkable peculiarity; and especially in this epistle. His sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible; but when we search for their connection, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do even in the epistles of St. Paul. The principal signature and characteristic of his manner is an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour, in conjunction with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. His conceptions are apparently delivered to us in the order in which they arose to his own mind, and are not the product of artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation.

His leading design is, “To demonstrate the vanity of faith separate from morality, to sooth and refine the warm and over-zealous tempers of the Christians

“ to whom he writes, into that amiable charity and  
 “ love for which he himself was so eminent and illustri-  
 “ ous, and to guard and arm them against the snares  
 “ and efforts of *antichrist*, the grand *apostate* and sedu-  
 cer of the Christian church, and of all who were en-  
 “ dued with his spirit ”

In pursuance of which pious and benevolent inten-  
 tion, he first testifies the Divine purity and holiness, and  
 the grace and mercy which is exhibited in Jesus Christ,  
 to all who lament and confess their sins with sincere  
 desires of reformation and amendment; (chap. i. 1, to  
 the end.) And then he urges the propitiation and inter-  
 ception of Christ, as argument to that obedience, that  
 brotherly love, and that victory over the world, which  
 are the genuine fruits of Divine love, (chap. ii. 1—17.)  
 And that they might not be perverted from their course  
 of fidelity and holy obedience, he forewarns them of  
 the many *antichrists* who were springing up in the  
 world, directing them to the best preservatives against  
 their seducing and ensnaring doctrines (ver. 18—28.)  
 With the same intention of awaking a generous ambi-  
 tion in their breasts, to attain the Divine resemblance,  
 he discourses of those exalted privileges to which Chris-  
 tians, as the children of God, are entitled, and urges the  
 necessity of holiness, both in heart and life, to prove  
 that we are in that blessed number, (ver. 29—iii. 10.)  
 In this view, namely, as the grand characteristic of the  
 children of God, he further enforces brotherly love,  
 (ver. 11, to the end.) Cautioning them more particu-  
 larly against being deceived by seducing spirits, and di-  
 recting them in what manner they might distinguish  
 between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, (chap.  
 iv. 1—12.) Drawing to a conclusion, with declaring his  
 general design to be, the confirmation of their faith;  
 reminding them of the ground they had to hope their  
 prayers should be heard for themselves and others, who  
 had not sinned unpardonably; and at the close, adding  
 a reflection on the happy difference, which their know-  
 ing God in Jesus Christ had made between them and  
 an ignorant and ungodly world, ver. 13, to the end.





A

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

### FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF St. JOHN.

#### SECT. I.

*The apostle John opens the pious and charitable design which he had in writing this epistle, and lays the foundation of what he has further to say, in bearing his testimony to the holiness of God, and to the mercy which he exhibits in Jesus Christ to all who are truly sensible of their sins, and confess them with sincere desires of reformation and amendment. 1 John I. 1. to the end.*

1 JOHN I. 1.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have

1 JOHN I. 1.

MY Christian brethren, I am now going to address you on a very important subject; to speak of *that which was from the beginning* of the gospel-declaration, and indeed from the beginning of the world, and previous to its existence; of *that which we have heard* most credibly attested by authentic witnesses, and *that which we have not taken* merely on their credit, but have *seen with our own eyes*; we are going to treat of *that which we have attentively looked*

SECT.

I.

1 John  
I 1.

276 *St. John asserts, that they declared what they had seen :*

SECT.

1.

John

1. 1.

*upon,*<sup>a</sup> and viewed so near and so long, that it is impossible we should mistake in it; *and which,* in allusion to the condescension of our blessed Redeemer in submitting himself to be examined by our touch and feeling, I may venture to say, that even *our hands have handled<sup>b</sup> of the word*

looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.

*2 of eternal life.* And well may it be styled the word of life; for *even Jesus, who himself is the living word, and eternal life, was graciously manifested in human flesh for the redemption of sinful men; and we saw [it] in its full evidence, and we cheerfully bear our renewed testimony, and declare unto you that eternal life, which from the foundation of the world was with the Father, most intimately conversant with him, and united to him; but in due time, by assuming the human nature into an union with the Divine, was manifested to us with all the genuine characters*

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

*3 of the promised Messiah.* And in consequence of this, *what we have seen and intimately conversed with, and have not only heard of, but have ourselves heard speaking to us, we declare unto you: that ye also may have communion with us in that dignity and felicity to which we are by Divine grace, exalted: and truly it is a glorious privilege well worthy your most ready acceptance and earnest pursuit; for our communion is with God the Father, and with his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, as we are happy in an intimate and inseparable union with each.*

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

*4 And these things we write to you, that the Divine life may be so improved in your souls, and your meetness for the heavenly inheritance may be so apparent, and so advanced, that your joy may, as far as possible, be fulfilled, and no circumstance, which this mortal state will admit, may be wanting to complete it.*

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

<sup>a</sup> *That which we have attentively looked upon, ο θεωρημεθα.*] Mr. Blackwall observes, (in his Sac. Class. Vol. II. p. 152.) that it is by no means synonymous with the former clause, but hath a more emphatical signification, namely, that of *beholding attentively*, with a kind of delight and admiration.

<sup>b</sup> *Our hand. have handled.*] This probably refers to Thomas' having insisted upon handling Christ's body, in proof of

his resurrection, which being permitted, was a confirmation of this important fact to all after-ages. Dr. Berriman supposes these words were particularly levelled against the Menandrians, who denied the real existence of the *flesh of Christ*, and asserted that it was only a visible appearance: they were therefore called *ἄσχετοι*, and *φωσιστες*. See his Hist. of the Trin. p. 77.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

<sup>c</sup> *God is light.*] This expresses his most clear and perfect knowledge, for light discovers all things; his unspotted holiness, for light is incapable of any pollution; and his sovereign goodness and happiness, for light, joined with vital heat, inspires pleasure into universal nature. See Dr. Bates's Works, p. 537.

<sup>d</sup> *If we confess our sins.*] This so evi-

*And this is the great declaration which we have heard from him, upon which our faith most cheerfully centers, and which we again declare unto you, that God is perfect light,<sup>c</sup> consummate knowledge and holiness; and in him there is no darkness at all, not the least mixture of ignorance, or of sin. And if we pretend to say, that we have communion with him, and walk in darkness, that is, go on in the practice of sin, which is as contrary to his holy nature, as darkness is to that of light, whatever professions we may make of our acquaintance with Christianity, and of being zealous for its interest, we lie, and do not the truth, but act in direct opposition to it. But if, on the other hand, we walk in the light of holiness, as he himself is ever in the light of it, and surrounded with it as his brightest glory, we have then communion with him, and with one another in him; and though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, for which so holy a God might for ever banish us from his presence, and of many remaining imperfections, which might discourage our approaches to him, we have this grand consolation, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all our sins, be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous. And indeed it is a consolation which we absolutely need; for if we say, that we have no sin, it is too evident that we grossly deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; we must be destitute of every good principle, if we are utterly insensible of our own guilt and imperfection. But if we confess our sins<sup>d</sup> to God, with a becoming lowliness and contrition of spirit, he is not only merciful and gracious, but faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, in consideration of his engagements to our great Surety, and to us by him, and effectually to cleanse us from all unrighte-*

SECT

I.

1 John

I. 5.

dently refers to confessing our sins to God, and not to the priest, that one could hardly forbear being astonished, that it should ever have been urged in behalf of auricular confession; if it were not for the many examples we have of such shameful and preposterous reasoning in the arguments which are pleaded in favour of popery.

LECT. *ousness*, by his atoning blood, and the influence  
1. of that sanctifying Spirit which it has purchased  
for us.

John  
10. This is our ground of confidence, and our  
refuge as sinners; and let us often renew our  
applications to it: for as on this foundation we  
are indeed secure, so on the other hand, *if we*  
are so rash and presumptuous, as to *say, that we*  
*have not sinned*, we not only lie ourselves, which  
in every instance must be displeasing to the God  
of truth; but *we*, in effect *make him a liar*;  
who in the constitution of the gospel which he  
hath sent to all, goes on a supposition, that every  
soul to whom it is addressed, is under guilt and  
condemnation. And consequently, if we assert  
and maintain our own personal innocence, we shall  
shew that *his word is not in us*, that this hum-  
bling message of his grace has never been cor-  
dially received by us, nor hath produced its ge-  
nuine effects on our hearts.

10 If we say that  
we have not sinned,  
we make him a liar,  
and his word is not  
in us.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

verse 1 How seriously should we attend to the word of life, when ad-  
dressed to us by those who were so intimately acquainted with it,  
and with him who brought it and revealed it to the world! In like  
manner may all concerned in dispensing it, be able to say that it  
is what they have heard, and, as it were, seen and handled; yea,  
tasted and let in all its sweetness and energy. Jesus Christ is in-  
2 deed that life which was with the Father, and is now manifested  
unto us: may we ever regard him as such, and have communion  
with John, and the other sacred writers, in their *communion with*  
3 *the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. Surely they, who by  
experience know the delight and benefit of that communion, will  
desire that others may be partakers of it with themselves. Their  
own joy, instead of being diminished, will be rather rendered  
1 more complete and intense, by being in this manner imparted to  
others.

Nothing can be of more importance than to form right and  
worthy conceptions of God; and that we may do so, let us re-  
flect on him as the purest and even unmingled light, without any  
the least shade of darkness; as truth in perfection, without any  
mixture of falsehood or evil. And let us be particularly con-

\* *We make him a liar.*] This text plainly implies, that Christianity does in effect assert, that we are all in a dege-nerate state, and consequently is a clear proof of the corruption of human nature

cerned, that as we desire to *have fellowship with him*, we allow not ourselves to *walk in darkness* of any kind, but *put off all its works*, that we may *put on the whole armour of light*, and *walk in the light*, as he is of the light. Let every action of our lives, every thought of our hearts, be brought to the light of the gospel, and tried and proved according to it. And as it would be very vain and criminal in us, to deny our having any sin, as it would be self-deceit to imagine it, and self-confusion to affirm it, let us, 10 with humble thankfulness, apply to that blood, which is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Most freely confessing our sins, in all their aggravations, so far as our weak and limited thoughts can attain to the view of them, let us humbly plead his promise, and his covenant; and then fidelity and justice will join with mercy, to insure our deliverance from the punishment they merit: so that instead of being, as we have deserved, companions in condemnation and ruin, we shall share together in that complete freedom from all the penal consequences of sin, which will be the portion of all those who truly repent, and obey the gospel.

SECT.  
1.  
Verse  
6, 7

## SECT. II.

*Farther to promote that holiness of temper, which it is the great design of this epistle to recommend, the apostle urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, and the necessity of shewing our love to God, by obedience, by brotherly love, and by overcoming the immoderate love of the world.* 1 John II. 1—17.

### I JOHN II. 1.

Yours II. 1.  
MY little children,  
these things write  
I unto you, that ye  
sin not. And if any  
man sin, we have an  
Advocate with the

PERMIT me now to address myself to you, with all tenderness and endearment, as *my little children*, and to assure you, that *I write these things* concerning the readiness of God to forgive sin, not to encourage you to offend, but with a contrary purpose, *that you may not sin*. And I hope you will consider it as your highest interest, to guard against that greatest and most formidable of all evils. *But if any man*, through the surprise of a violent temptation, and remaining infirmity of human nature, do fall into sin, let him not absolutely despair, as if his case were hopeless; for we have still this great and important consolation, that if we are true believers, *we have an Advocate with the Father*, to

SECT.  
II.  
1 John  
II. 1

\* An Advocate with the Father.] The word, *advocate*, in our language commonly signifies one who is to plead for a person in a court of judicature; but Dr.

**LECT.** plead for our pardon and renew our peace, even Father Jesus Christ the righteous :

**II.** *Jesus Christ, the righteous one ;* that great exalted Saviour, who was himself, by way of eminence, and in such a degree, as no other person dwelling in human flesh ever was, so perfectly righteous, that his obedience absolutely answered the demands of the Divine law in all its extent and purity.

**John**  
**II. 1**

*And he is the great propitiation for our sins,* to whom, under that character, we have fled with cheerful confidence ; and it is a joy to us to reflect, that he is *not only* the propitiation *for ours, but also [for the sins] of the whole world<sup>b</sup>* : no nation under heaven is excluded from a share in the blessings he hath purchased, nor shall any person whatsoever be excluded, let his iniquities have been ever so great and aggravated, if he be disposed to make a proper application to him. *And by this certain mark and evidence, we know that we are acquainted with him* to the most happy and effectual purposes, even *if we* faithfully and uprightly *keep all his commandments.* For *he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar ;* he falsely pretends to a knowledge of him, of which he is quite destitute ; and therefore *in this respect the truth is not [in him.]* But *whosoever* uprightly and impartially *keepeth his word, in him certainly is the love of God perfected :* it is plain he has it truly in his heart, and does not, like those who

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him :

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of

Samuel Harris hath taken great pains to show, that it properly signifies the same with *patron* amongst the Romans, or *qyy* in the Hebrew, a *great person*, who used to patronize the cause of some of inferior rank, and who was also a *father* for their good behaviour. By which it may be illustrated, and particularly Isa. l. 7—9 ; Job xxix. 12 ; Psal. lxxiii. 12 ; Job xxxiii. 23, &c. And in confirmation of this sentiment he brings some remarkable quotations from the ancients. Harris's Observ. p. 49—61. Perhaps there is nothing that illustrates the matter more, than the residence of some eminent persons from distant provinces, in the courts of great princes or states, whose business it was constantly to negotiate with them the affairs of those whom they represented, to vindicate them

from any unjust aspersions, and to advance their interest to the utmost of their power.

<sup>b</sup> For the sins of the whole world.] Mr. Reyner has urged this as a proof, that the merit of Christ's death shall extend, not only to *believers*, but to *virtuous heathens* ; and I do not see that Christianity can receive any prejudice by our acknowledging, that if there are those in whom a *truly virtuous temper* prevails, they may be accepted of God, in consideration of the *atonement* which Christ hath made. But this will by no means prove the doctrine of *universal redemption*, in the sense in which some persons have stated it. But it seems to me, that the apostle is to be understood, as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world.

and he who would abide in him, ought to walk as he walked. 28

God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and loveth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and

are regardless of the Divine authority, make a vain and hypocritical pretence to it. And by this we know, that we are interested in the Son of God, and united to him by this influence of our faith upon our practice. He that saith, he abideth in him, and pretends a claim to his saving benefits, ought himself so to walk as he, whom he calls his Divine Master, walked, when he was here on earth. He ought in every thing to trace, and endeavour to imitate his example.

And this is so obvious and natural a truth, that I persuade myself, brethren, ye already know it; for herein I write no new commandment to you, but the old commandment, founded in nature, recommended by the Mosaic law, and that which ye had especially inculcated from the beginning of your acquaintance with the gospel, the great practical intent of which was, doubtless, presently made known to you, by whomsoever it was preached. I may therefore well say, it is the old commandment; for it is the word which you heard from the beginning of your acquaintance with Christianity. Yet considering its peculiar obligations, and the new motives with which it is enforced upon us continually, I may say again, a new commandment I write to you, which expression is true in him, and in you, for he has laid us under new engagements to observe it, by his admirable love declared and exhibited to us; because the darkness of heathenism, and twilight of the Jewish state, is now passed away, and the true light now shineth, and in proportion to our knowledge, he may reasonably expect, that our care to act suitably should be awakened. He that saith, he is in the light, that he enjoyeth, that he understands and receives the gospel, and hateth his brother, and does him any designed injury, is in the darkness even till now. And his ineffectual acquaintance with some principles of religion, which do not influence his heart to charity and beneficence, will, as to his real and final happiness, stand him in no stead. But he that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, he improves the advantages which he enjoys by the Christian religion, and as he answers its

SECT.

II.

1 John

II. 5.



SECT. end, he will continually share the pleasure *and* there is none occa-  
 II. the security, which it gives; for *there is no occa-* sion of stumbling in  
 him.

1 John  
 II. 10.

from giving any just cause of offence; whereas the malevolent passions turn a thousand circumstances into temptations, which prove fatal to a man's credit and repose in this world, and his

11 salvation in the next. *But on the contrary,* as I said before, *he who hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness; and the consequence of that is, that as one who walketh in the night, without any light to guide him, knows not whither he goeth; so such an one,* while he flattereth himself with the hopes of salvation on account of his knowledge and profession, is really ignorant of his own state, *because darkness hath blinded his eyes;* and so he is in the utmost danger of falling, before he is aware, into the bottomless pit, from whence there is no redemption.

11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 These things I say unto you, and they are of universal concern; I hope therefore you will all attend to them, and improve them for your own advantage. *I write unto you, little children,* amongst the rest, to guard the least and weakest of you against sin: *because by his name,* even the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for them, *your sins are forgiven you,* and I am very solicitous that you may make all due return for so inestimable a favour, as a pardon purchased at the expence of such sacred

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 blood. [*I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning; because ye have heard of his divine dignity and glory, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and himself God; that ye may behave aright towards that Divine Saviour, who submitted to such abasement for us, though originally he was so exalted and glorious. I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one,* have bravely bid defiance to his allurements and terrors, in taking upon you, in so solemn a manner, the Christian profession; and I would by no means have you disgrace the victory you have already gained. *I*

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked

one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

write to you, little children,] because even the youngest of you have known God, as the Father of his people, have been taught to call upon him as your Father in heaven; and I desire you may, with all filial reverence and love, approve yourselves dutiful and grateful to him under that relation

SECT. 11.

1 John 11. 12.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

And (as I have before said,) I have written to you, fathers, because ye have known him who is from the beginning; so also, I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong, you are in the full vigour of nature; and may God preserve your hearts in a right frame, and lengthen out your lives to do him much service in future and distant years. And this may the rather be expected, as the word of God abideth in you, as you have been instructed in the principles of Divine truth by your pious parents, and other teachers, and many of you have given noble specimens of the good effects of their instructions, in that ye have already overcome the wicked one in many of his attacks; for otherwise ye could not have assumed the profession of the Christian faith in these circumstances, nor have retained it for such a length of time.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the

And now whatever your age, station, and circumstances may be, suffer me to address to you one farther word of exhortation; which is this, Love not the world, nor the things [which are] in the world, in an irregular and excessive de-

[To you little children, &c.] There is such an apparent tautology in these three verses, as cannot, that I know of, be equalled in any other part of scripture. Some have imagined, that the signification of *little children* here, (in the original *παιδια*;) is different from that in the 12th verse, (where the word is *παιδια*;) which Wolfius says is used to signify Christians in general, whereas *παιδια* refers either to those who were young in years, or lately converted to Christianity. (See *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 279.) And they have supposed the meaning of the apostle's exhortation here is, that as one of the first persons children become acquainted with, is their father, so they should know God, and improve more and more in a practical acquaintance with him: and each of these congratulations contains a tacit exhortation to go on in that

which he commends them for, or congratulates them upon. But on the whole, comparing the beginning of the 13th with the 14th verse, where the same words are repeated, I am ready to conjecture, that if they were written in the original, they were left out again, and were written more perfectly afterwards in the 14th; and consequently, that all that should be retained, is the last clause of it, in connection with the 12th. *For sins are forgiven—because ye have known the Father.* Thus all tautology is avoided, and every sentiment and expression of the verses, is preserved. I have therefore inclosed in a parenthesis all that part, both of the text and paraphrase, which may be left out without taking away any thing from the sense, or burdening it with an unnecessary repetition.

<sup>6</sup> SECT. gree;<sup>d</sup> for if any one love the world with too great an attachment, and have his heart chiefly set on its interests or its pleasures, it may justly be concluded, that *the love of the Father is not in him*; for there is a real inconsistency between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God: which will easily appear, when we consider

world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

<sup>11.</sup> <sup>7</sup> John <sup>11. 15.</sup> be concluded, that *the love of the Father is not in him*; for there is a real inconsistency between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God: which will easily appear, when we consider

16 what we may justly understand by the world; *For all that is in the world*, when it comes to make up the largest catalogue of good things, which it can promise to those who eagerly and idolatrously pursue it, [is] to be comprehended under these three well known particulars, *the lust of the flesh*, that is, the pleasurable indulgence of our carnal appetites; *and the lust of the eyes*, that is, the acquisition of money, which if not expended for other purposes for which it is designed, only serves us to behold and count over; *and the pride of life*,<sup>e</sup> some ambitious pursuits, in consequence of which we may make a parade in the eyes of our fellow-creatures for a little while, in our way to the grave, which is to strip us of it all. Now it is evident that, [*these things*] considered as the food of luxury, avarice, and ambition, *are not of the Father, but of the world*. It plainly appears, that God, considered as the author of all good, cannot be pleased with such affections and pursuits; and it would be profane to suppose that they are produced or excited by him, or that the prevalence of them can be acknowledged by him, as consistent with his love

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world

17 in the heart. Endeavour therefore, my brethren, to get more and more above such snares and entanglements as these; *and so much the rather, as the world, and all the luxury of it, and*

17 And the world

<sup>d</sup> In an irregular and excessive degree.] It is plainly necessary to attend to *such a limitation*; for otherwise there is a degree of love to worldly enjoyments which is rational, and which we must have for them, or we cannot in a proper manner attend to the duties of life.

<sup>e</sup> *The pride of life*: ἀλαζονία τῆς βίης. Erasmus Schindler understands this of that vain and empty boasting of the continuance of life, and of projects to be executed in some future part of it, which St. James condemns. (James iv. 16.) Raphael seems to have been at first of

the same opinion; (see Annot. ex Xenoph. in loc.) but afterwards from the use of the word ἀλαζονία, in Polybius, (see Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.) he was disposed to understand it in general, of *the splendour and luxury*, which vain persons affect in their whole manner of living. But more strictly, the phrase, ἀλαζονία τῆς βίης, refers to that ambitious turn of mind, which prompts men to engage in all those pursuits, which will supply materials for their vanity, and enable them to make a figure in the world. See Wolfii Curæ Philolog. in loc.

passeth away, and the  
lust thereof: but he  
that doeth the will  
of God, abideth for  
ever.

whatever belongs to it, which can serve to the gratification of our desires, *passes away* like a glaring pageant, which only amuses the eye for a few transient moments, and then disappears. *But he that doeth the will of God faithfully and steadily, abideth for ever*; he hath built his happiness upon a basis which nothing can remove, and accordingly finds it secure, even when he quits this momentary world, and enters on an eternal and unalterable state.

SECT.  
II.

1 John  
II 17.

# IMPROVEMENT.

OFTEN let us be lifting up our eyes and our hearts to him who is our great *Advocate with the Father*: too frequently do the infirmities of our lives demand our application to him under that character. Let us rejoice that he is *Jesus Christ the righteous*, that he is the *Lord our righteousness*. While we joy in him as the propitiation for our sins, let it comfort our heart to think, how wide the efficacy of his atonement extends. O, that all the world might be engaged to apply to him under this important consideration! O, that all those who profess so to apply to him, might remember how necessary it is, that if they would shew they indeed know him, they should keep his commandments: this, rather than any of those passionate transports of mind, on which some are ready to lay so great a stress, is the perfection of love to God. May the spirit of Christ impress upon us more of our Master's image, and teach us with greater care and exactness to order our walk and conversation by his example. Since we have an illustrious light to direct our path, let us make use of it to this purpose, lest eternal darkness come upon us. Let us learn the Divine lesson we are here taught, to love our brethren, and gradually to rise higher above that love of the world, that attachment to temporal and present interests, which is inconsistent with the love of the Father! When we are tempted too fondly to admire, or too eagerly to pursue this gaudy pageant, let us survey the inventory here given of its boasted treasures. Let us compute the most it can even pretend to confer upon us, and impartially weigh all that can gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, against those solid pleasures which arise from the love of God, against those infinite benefits which will finally result from it. They who do his will abide for ever, nor is their removal from this empty and transitory world any objection against it. Yea, rather, how would it be possible, or how desirable, they should abide for ever, were not a removal from such a mutable, such an unsatisfying, and in many respects afflicting world, to make a part of the plan, formed by Divine Providence and grace in their favour!

Verse

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## SECT. III.

*The apostle discourses of the antichrists which then began to arise in the world, and directs Christians to the best preservatives against their seducing doctrines.* 1 John II. 18—28.

1 JOHN II. 18.

SECT.  
III.1 John  
II. 18.

AND now, my beloved, dear to me as *little children* to the most affectionate parents<sup>a</sup>, attend to my cautions against those many seducers, with which not only the world, but even the church abounds. *It is indeed the last time*<sup>b</sup>; the last dispensation God will ever give to the world, is now promulgated; and it is no wonder if Satan endeavour to the utmost to adulterate a system from which his kingdom has so much to fear. *And as you have heard, that one great seducer, from his opposition to Christ called antichrist, is coming*, so I must assure you, that *even now there are many* aspiring and interested men, who act in such opposition to the Redeemer's cause, and the whole purposes of his appearance, that though they profess his name, they may not improperly be called *antichrists*<sup>c</sup>, by which indeed we may know that *this is the last time*, for when we compare this event with the predictions of our Lord, it is so far from contradicting them, that indeed it is a great accomplishment and illustration of them. Once indeed they pretended to join themselves to us; but that it was only an hypocritical pretence to Christianity which they made, appears from the issue of it: *they went out from among us*, and yet *they were not*, upon the whole, *of us*, nor did truly belong to our number, while they seemed

1 JOHN II. 18.

LITTLE children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us, for

<sup>a</sup> *Little children.*] Mr. Cradock has observed, that *little children* are not so apt to love the world; but seem by reason of the weakness of their understandings, more likely to be seduced by artful and designing men; and therefore he imagines, that in this place there is a peculiar propriety in this appellation. See Crad. Apost. Hist. p. 48<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> *The last time.*] Some explain this of the last age of the Jewish church and commonwealth, because it was the period

in which our Saviour had foretold the rise of many *false Christs*; and this observation, to be sure, is material. but the expression of *the last time*, from comparing other scriptures, seems to be more extensive.

<sup>c</sup> *Many antichrists.*] Dr. Whitby explains these antichrists of unbelieving Jews opposing Christianity. I rather understand them to be apostates, who had once professed themselves Christians, and brought in pernicious heretical notions

if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us

to adhere to us. *For if they had ever been sincerely of us*, so as to feel the inward power of our gospel on their hearts, *they would doubtless have continued with us*; upright men would never have seen any cause to leave us, and Divine grace would have preserved such from the temptations by which these artful deceivers have been ensnared. *But [this hath happened,] that they might be made apparent*, and that we might also reap an advantage from the detection of their hypocrisy, *because it would thereby appear, that all who join with us in external forms, are not indeed of us*;<sup>d</sup> but that even in the purest churches, there may be a mixture of tares among the wheat, which it will be prudence to remember, and to guard against.

SECT.

III.

1 John  
II. 19,

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things:

And as for you, I hope and trust you will not be seduced by them; for *ye have an inward anointing of the Holy One*, even the spirit of purity and joy, which Christ the Holy one of God, hath poured forth upon us; and *ye know all things* relating to Christianity, in such an experimental manner, as will effectually preserve you against those snares of this vain world, which have been ruinous to those unhappy apostates I have just mentioned. And as to what I have now said, *I have* 21

21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that which is of the truth.

*not written to you, because ye know not the truth*, nor have I entered so largely into the discussion of this matter, as would then have been necessary; *but on the contrary, have contented myself with these short hints, because ye know it*, and I am desirous to confirm you in it, and to awaken your zeal to join with me in testifying it to others, and opposing the many false doctrines which are taught in opposition to it: *for every lie is not of the truth*; there is an irreconcilable inconsistency between truth and falsehood, and the more you are confirmed in the one, the more faithfully will you guard

22 Who is a liar, against and oppose the other. And *who is a* 22 *liar* and a seducer in the most dangerous sense

<sup>d</sup> *That they might be made apparent, because all are not of us: for we was many; εἰς πολλοὺς.*] Thus, I think, these words may be rendered; and the meaning is, that as there are some, who only pretend

to be Christians, when they are not, and for some secular end mingle themselves with us. God has suffered these to be discovered, to awe and alarm others who may yet be concealed

SECRET.

III.  
—  
John  
20.

that can be imagined, *but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*<sup>e</sup> This is the most pernicious of all errors, and tends most directly to overthrow all virtue and religion in the world, and utterly to subvert and destroy men's souls; and he who maintains *this* detestable doctrine, is in a sense *antichrist*, who in effect *denies* both

but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 *the Father and the Son*: For however some may pretend a zeal for the honour of God, while they are crying down that of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet so it is, that *every one who denieth the Son, hath not* any real regard to the Father, nor any interest in him: for God hath declared with an evidence which all who sincerely love and honour him will not fail to receive, that no man cometh to the Father but by Christ; that he is well-pleased in him as his beloved Son, and maintains a favourable intercourse with sinful men only by him. [*But he who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also,*<sup>f</sup> and taketh the most effectual method to secure the continuance of his favour.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: {but} he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.

24 *As for you therefore*, to whom I now address myself, let what I here say be improved by way of caution to yourselves; be on your guard against the numerous artifices of those who would ensnare and seduce you, and *let that word which you have heard from me, at the beginning of the gospel, abide in you* so steadily, that no man may ever wrest it from you. And *if* it be indeed so, and *that word which ye have heard from the beginning*, thus *abide in you, you also will abide in* that state of blessed union, in which you are, with *the Son and the Father*; you will dwell under their united protection, and find a source of delight springing up in your souls from communion

Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. It that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, and continue in the Son and in the Father.

<sup>e</sup> Per with that Jesus is the Christ.] Some are of opinion this was written against Cerinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining them to be two distinct persons, and denied him to be the Son of God. See Dr. Berriman's Hist. of the Trinit. p. 38. Compare Dr. Whitby's Preface to this epistle. Mr. Baxter also takes in the Simonians, Menandrians, and Cerpoeritians, with other heretics in those early age. Baxter's Works, Vol. III. p. 218.

<sup>f</sup> He who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.] These words, which I have included in brackets, are generally printed in our version in *italic characters*; but they are to be found in so many good manuscripts, that I cannot but believe they made a part of the original, by whatever accident they were omitted in some early copy, to which, as it seems too much regard has been paid. See Mills and Western in loc.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life

with them, to which there is nothing comparable in any of the enjoyments of the present world. *And this* will readily be acknowledged, if you only consider, with what exalted hopes you will then be supported: for *this is the promise which he hath promised to us*, (which while I mention, I cannot but exceedingly rejoice in the consideration of my own interest in it,) even the possession of that invaluable treasure, *eternal life*, in comparison of which, whether we consider its excellence, or its duration, all the glories of the world, and even the world itself, are lighter than vanity, and unworthy the reflection of a single moment.

26 These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and it is truth,

*These things therefore I have written unto you concerning those who would deceive you,* and rob you of that inestimable treasure, that you may guard against them with the utmost vigilance. *And*, I trust this will indeed be the case, for *as* 27 *for you* in general, I esteem you sincere in the profession of your religion, and therefore may reasonably say, that *the unction* of the Holy Spirit *which you have received from him*,<sup>h</sup> who hath given you the promise of eternal life, *abideth in you* perpetually and powerfully; and in consequence thereof *you have no such necessity as others, that any one should teach you the first principles of true religion.* But let it be your care uprightly and humbly to yield up your souls to the superior instructions of this Divine Spirit; and *as this same unction from him teacheth you concerning all things,*<sup>i</sup> and it is true,

[*Those who would deceive you.*] It is in the original, *they who do deceive you*; but it is plain, as has often been observed, from the commendations given them elsewhere, that it signifies no more than an *endeavour to seduce*; and there are many passages, both in sacred and profane authors, in which a person is said to *do a thing*, which he attempts. See Mr. Blackwall's Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 121.

<sup>h</sup> *The unction which you have received from him, &c.*] The Spirit of God is compared to an *anointing*, because of his precious and cherishing gifts which rendered Christians more fit to encounter with their spiritual enemies; as wrestlers were anointed with oil to make them fitter for

their various exercises, and to prevent the advantages which might otherwise be taken against them. Whether this passage will be less capable of yielding support to the popish doctrine of *chrism*, or that of the Quakers, which asserts such an *inspiration* of all Christians as renders the office of a stated *ministry* unnecessary, it is hard to say. Compare Limborch's Theol. v. 77. 4, and Barclay's Apology, p. 52. With relation to the latter, it may be of some moment to observe, that the *Christian ministry* was in the highest repute in the church, when the *gifts of the Spirit* were poured down upon it in the greatest abundance.

<sup>i</sup> *The Spirit teacheth you all things.*] It



SECT. *and has no mixture of falsehood in it, even as that* and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.  
 111. *has taught you, abide in him to whom by that spirit ye are thus vitally united. Yea, let me*  
 1 John 11. 28. *now repeat it again, as a matter of the highest importance, comprehending in one word the whole of our duty and happiness; my dear Christian friends, dear to me as little children to their affectionate parents, abide in him, that when he shall appear, as he assuredly will, in all his pomp and glory, we may have humble boldness, and may not be put to shame and confusion, before him at his coming; but may welcome him with cheerfulness, as those who have approved their fidelity to him, and expect, by his grace, an abundant reward.*

## IMPROVEMENT.

- Verse 18, 19 LET us not be surprised, if there are some who revolt from Christianity in our days; evincing thereby the insincerity of their former professions: since even the apostolic age produced some instances of this kind. But notwithstanding this, *the foundation of God standeth firm, and the Lord knoweth them that are his;* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) They will continue united with his church in faith and love, and no temptation will be able entirely to separate them from it.
- 22, 23 Vain are all pretences to adhere to the Father, if we desert the Son. To his gospel therefore let us stedfastly cleave, animated by the infinitely important promise of eternal life. Can we go to another Saviour? Can we expect from any other hand a nobler, or even an equal reward? May we all, who profess a relation to him, receive an anointing from above, which may teach us all those things it is of importance for us to know, and which may engage us to abide in him with inseparable fidelity. Yet a little while, and he will again come, will appear with a glory which will warrant, and will reward the firm attachment we have manifested to his interests. May we not, at that important period, have reason to be *ashamed before him*; may he not be ashamed of us; but having *confessed him before men*, may we be *confessed by him before his Father, and his holy angels*! (Luke xii. 8.)

seems manifest from hence, that every Christian is supposed to have been anointed by the Holy Ghost. But as it would be most absurd to pronounce it impossible, that a man in any degree of error should

be a true Christian, it plainly shews, in how restrained a sense many general expressions occurring in scripture, may be taken, and in that view is well worth our attentive regard.

SECT. IV

*The apostle discourses concerning the exalted privileges of the children of God, to which all true Christians are entitled, and urges the necessity of a holy temper, and of a holy life, in order to demonstrate that we are of that happy number. 1 John II. 29.—III. 10.*

1 JOHN II. 29.

**I**F ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 JOHN II. 29.

**I**HAVE before been discoursing of the Divine holiness and purity; now the consideration of this may enable you to judge, whether you are, or are not, in the happy number of the children of God. For *since ye know, that he is perfectly righteous, ye may know, that every one that practiseth righteousness, is born of him*; as the production of righteousness in the mind, argues a Divine agency upon it, therefore he, in whom it is produced, is, by regeneration, the Son of God.

SECT. IV.

1 John II. 29.

III. 1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Now on this view I would entreat you attentively to dwell; as indeed no subject can be more worthy of your serious regard. *Behold, my brethren, behold with delight and holy admiration, what manner of love, what immense, unutterable, inconceivable condescensions of love, the Father of universal nature, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath bestowed upon us, sinful mortals, that we should be honoured with so sublime an appellation, should be called the children of God;*<sup>a</sup> as he hath himself expressed it, I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. vi. 18.) It is true, indeed, this is a dignity which only attracts the observation of very few, and *in this respect the world knows us not*, and doth not acknowledge us for what we really are, *because it knoweth not him, who*

III. 1.

<sup>a</sup> *We should be called the children of God* ] The original word is, τέκνα, not υἱοί, and therefore should be rendered *children*, rather than *sons*. It is worth observing upon this text, that when the Danish missionaries appointed some of their Malabar converts to translate a catechism,

in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become *the sons of God*, one of the translators was startled at so bold a saying as he thought it, and said, *It is too much; let me rather render it, They shall be permitted to kiss his feet*. Let. of Van. Miss. No. 7. p. 56.

SECT. is God's eternal and first-born Son, the Head of the family, through whom we have received the adoption. Such are the unhappy prejudices of

John  
III. 1.

apostate men against the Divine will, and the Divine image, that Christ himself was unknown while he dwelt in human flesh; and therefore it is no wonder that we are so, in that respect in which we resemble him. Nevertheless, my beloved, it is a most certain, and a most joyful truth that *now we are the children of God, and a truth which draws after it a long train of glorious consequences; for it doth not yet perfectly appear what we shall be;*<sup>b</sup> the inheritance we expected is far beyond what we can at present conceive. But this *we know* in the general, *that if he, by whom we have received the adoption, be revealed,*<sup>c</sup> as he will certainly at length be, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;*<sup>d</sup> we shall have so clear and distinct a view and discernment of him, as shall transform us into his image, even the image of his holiness, the brightest and most illustrious of the various glories with which he is invested.

- 3 But let not any imagine this is an expectation indiscriminately to be entertained by all who style themselves Christians, or in any measure consistent with an unprofitable and wicked life. No, it is of the most generous tendency, and produces the most happy effects; for *every one who hath this hope in him* on a solid founda-

Beloved,  
are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And that bath this hope in him, purifieth him.

<sup>b</sup> *It doth not yet appear, &c.*] It is observable that these are the words of John, of him who had not only so familiarly conversed with Christ on this sublime and delightful subject, but had seen his transfiguration, when Moses and Elias appeared in such refulgent glory. He also, as Mr. Baxter observes in this connection, (See his Works, Vol. III. p. 16.) saw a most glorious vision, of the New Jerusalem. But it may be doubted, (whether this epistle were not of an earlier date than the apocalypse, and it seems most probable that it was, both considering the great age of the apostle, when banished to Patmos, and how naturally some things on which he touches in this epistle, especially relating to antichrist, might have been illustrated by what he saw there.

<sup>c</sup> *If he be revealed.*] This is one of

the many places, wherein the particle *or*, or *et*, which is nearly equivalent to it, does not imply any uncertainty of the event, but is put for *when*.

<sup>d</sup> *We shall see him as he is.*] Archbishop Tillotson well observeth, and proves that the sight of God is put to

Seneca has some most sublime passages in his third epistle, relating to that *Divine light* which good men should behold in a future state; the very thought of which, he says, will prohibit any thing sordid, base, or malicious, from settling in the mind that entertains it.

## Therefore Christians should be pure, as he is pure.

self, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righte-

eous, *purifieth himself* from every pollution, with a sincere desire to advance daily in every branch of moral perfection and excellence, till at length he becomes pure, *even as he is pure*; so far as the Divine holiness can be resembled by any creature in this mortal and imperfect state. On the other hand, *every one who practiseth sin, practiseth also the violation of the Divine law*; for this is the very nature and essence of sin, and what is common to every kind, and every act of it, that *sin is the violation of the law*,<sup>e</sup> either natural or revealed. And ye

know, that he who is so familiar to our thoughts, and our discourses, even our Divine Master and Saviour, *was manifested, that he might take away the guilt and power of our sins*, by his atonement, and by the sanctifying influences of his spirit; and there is no kind or degree of sin in him, nothing but what is of the most opposite nature. It is plain, therefore, that *every one who abideth in him, sinneth not*, cannot make a trade and practice of it; and that *every one who thus habitually and allowedly sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him*: his views and knowledge of him have been so superficial, as that they deserve not to be mentioned, since they have not conquered the love and prevalence of sin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.

My dear *little children, let no one deceive you* on this important matter by vain words, with whatever pomp, or solemnity, or plausibility they may be attended. A being himself immutably holy, can never dispense with the want of holiness in his reasonable creatures. *He who practiseth righteousness is righteous, even as he*

<sup>e</sup> *Sin is the violation of the law* ] I choose *violation* as rather a more expressive word than *transgression*, and so answering more exactly to *απομα*, which implies not only *απαγορευμα*, a passing the bounds of God's law, but an attempt, if possible, to annihilate and destroy it.

<sup>f</sup> *Every one who habitually and allowedly sinneth.* ] It seems absolutely necessary to interpret the expression *thus*, not only to prevent some of the best of Christians from falling into despair, on account of those remainders of sinful imperfection, which their very eminence in

religion causeth them to discern, and to lament: while others, evidently their inferiors, are vain and ignorant enough to conclude themselves perfect, and lacking nothing; but likewise to make one scripture consistent with another, (compare James iii. 2.) and even to reconcile this assertion to other passages in the epistle before us. See chap. i. 8—10.

<sup>g</sup> *He that practiseth righteousness is righteous.* ] It is very necessary to interpret the phrase *thus*, to avoid an indulgence as extravagant as the severity we have opposed above. For certainly it is

- himself is righteous: it is his own image, and he must invariably love and delight in it, and must as invariably abhor sin, as utterly contrary to his nature. For indeed *he who practiseth sin is of the devil*: he imitates his character; and complies with his instigations; *for the devil sinneth from the beginning*: he introduced sin into the creation of God, and he continues still to promote it ever since, to the utmost of his power and influence: <sup>8</sup> *whereas the appearance of the Son of God was to a quite different and contrary purpose; for he was manifested in human flesh, that he might dissolve and destroy the works of the devil*, that he might recover mankind from the apostasy into which they were seduced by the temptations of Satan: and delivering them from the bondage of sin, might restore them to the practice of universal righteousness, and thereby to the favour and enjoyment of God. *Every one who is born of God, who is regenerated by Divine grace, and adopted into the number of his children, doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him*; there is an immortal principle implanted by God in the heart, which will not suffer a man who hath received it, entirely to overbear it; *and he cannot sin, in such a manner, and to such a degree as others,*<sup>9</sup> *because he is thus born of God.*

not every one who performs some one just or righteous action, that can be denominated righteous; nor can any man be entitled to that character, who doth not in the main course of his life, practise universal righteousness.

<sup>8</sup> *Sinneth from the beginning, &c.*] Mr. Limborch imagines this phrase refers to repeated acts of sin, and a continued course of it which preceded Satan's expulsion from heaven. See Limborch Theol. lib. ii. cap. xx. sect. 4. But it seems, that the use of the present tense implies a continuance in a course of sin; which is indeed the case with respect to this malignant and unhappy spirit, who continues incorrigible, notwithstanding all he has already suffered, and all which he certainly knows, he has farther to endure.

<sup>9</sup> *Destroy the works of the devil: λυτῶν.*] This expressive word leads us to look on sin and misery as a fabric, of which the devil is the great architect, and which

Christ is come to overthrow and demolish. Accordingly he has already broken, as it were, the compages and strength of it; and we may hope it will gradually be levelled, and its very ruins removed. He has certainly done what has a most powerful tendency to produce such an effect. But it seems driving matters to a very unjustifiable extremity, to argue from hence, as some have done, the utter extirpation of all moral and penal evil from the universe. And were not the judgment so palpably biased by the affections, as we see it to be in many instances, it is not to be conceived that men of penetration should have laid any stress on so precarious an argument.

<sup>8</sup> *He cannot sin.*] It is certain these words must be taken in something of a qualified sense, or they would prove not only the sinless perfection of every child of God, but also the impeccability of every such person, or the impossibility of his sin-

teous, even as he is righteous:

<sup>8</sup> He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

## Reflections on the privilege of being born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, who never doth it right manner is it of God neither he that loveth not his brother

In this therefore, and by this, as the grand characteristic, are the children of God manifested on the one hand, and the children of the devil, on the other. Every one who doth not practise righteousness is not of God, and I may add, as a matter of great consequence, that he who loveth not his brother, as he cannot practise righteousness, a great part of which consists in brotherly love, is not of God, neither can he, without great presumption, pretend to claim a place amongst his children.

### IMPROVING

How inestimable a privilege is it to be born of God! What reason have those that possess it, to rejoice and be exceedingly glad! With what astonishment should we reflect upon the Divine condescension, in admitting us to such an endearing relation! Let us behold with admiration and joy, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we sinful wretched mortals should be called the sons of God! Let us behold how high it rises, how wide it diffuses its effects! How glorious the inheritance, to which in consequence of this we are entitled! The world indeed knows it not, nor do we ourselves completely know it. Even John, the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of our Lord, and drank so deep out of the fountain head of knowledge and holiness, even he says, *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*. But let us, in sweet tranquillity of soul, depend on our heavenly Father, that he will do whatever is becoming his perfect wisdom and goodness, in respect to the advancement and felicity of his own children. During our state of minority,<sup>2</sup> let us be contented to be at his allowance, and rejoice, that we are in the general fold, that when Christ, the first-born of the family, shall make his second triumphant appearance, we shall also appear with him in glory, new dressed from the grave, to adorn his train, and transformed into his illustrious image, not only with respect to the glories of the body, but the brighter glories of the immortal spirit. With him we shall have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, and for ever experience the efficacy of that near and intimate vision of him, which we shall there enjoy, to transform us into the same likeness, from

ring, which none have been wild and enthusiastic enough to avert. It must therefore I think, be understood only as expressing a strong disinclination to sin, in the kind and degree referred to before. And it is certain, there are many passages of scripture, in which the word *avert*

must be taken in such a latitude. Compare Luke xiii 33, Heb ix 5 Neh vi 3, Numb xxii 18. And this phraseology Raphaelius well illustrates by similar passages from the classic. See Annot ex Polyb in loc.

*They are reminded, that they should love one another ;*

glory to glory. O, that in the mean time, we may all feel the energy of this blessed hope to purify our souls, that our hearts and dispositions may correspond to our expectations! When Christ came in human flesh, it was with this important purpose, *that he might take away sin, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, and reduce to order and harmony that confusion and ruin, which Satan by his malicious insinuations had introduced into the world. Blessed Jesus! may this thy benevolent design be more and more effectual. May the empire of sin and corruption, which is the empire of hell, be entirely subdued, and thy celestial kingdom of grace and holiness advanced. And may none deceive themselves, nor forget, that *he alone is righteous who practiseth righteousness*. By this let us judge of ourselves, whether we are the children of God, or of the devil. And instead of flattering ourselves that though we do commit sin with allowance, yet there may be some secret seed of God still concealed in our hearts; let us judge of our having received this regenerating seed, by its tendency to preserve us from sin, and the victories it enables us to gain over its destructive wiles and insufferable tyranny.

## SECT. V.

*The apostle discourses of the necessity and importance of brotherly love, as a distinguishing mark and characteristic of the children of God. 1 John III 11, to the end.*

### 1 JOHN III. 11.

SECT.  
V.

1 John  
III. 11.

I MENTIONED the want of brotherly love, as an argument of not belonging to God; and a little consideration may persuade you, that it is indeed so. *For this, as you know, is the message which you heard of us the apostles and ministers of Christ, from the beginning of our appearance among you, as our Lord had frequently in person inculcated it, and almost with his dying breath, that we should love one another ;*

12 And that we should not be as Cain, [who] was most apparently *of the wicked one, and barbarously slew his own innocent and pious brother. And for what cause did he slay him ? truly for this, because his own deeds were evil, and those of his brother righteous*: in consequence of which he was disapproved, and his brother approved by God; and this excited not his repentance, but his envy and hatred, which at length settled

### 1 JOHN III. 11.

FOR this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

*for he who loveth not his brother, abideth in death.*

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you,

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

<sup>a</sup> *Passed over from death to life.*] This is said even of the best of men; which implies by a strong consequence, that they are, as it were, *born in the land and territories of death*; or that the gospel finds them in such a condition, as to be liable to condemnation and destruction, to the execution of a capital sentence. And it seems to me, that such oblique expressions speak such truths as these, in a manner peculiarly convincing and affecting.

<sup>b</sup> *He know his love, as he hath laid down his life for us.*] This text, as it stands in our version, has generally been men-

into the most rancorous malice, and produced that horrible effect. And as there is a great deal of the same malignant temper remaining in the world, and there are many, in that sense, though not by natural descent, of the seed of Cain, *wonder not, my brethren, if, under this influence, the world hate you.* But we, on the other hand, *know that we are passed over, from the boundaries and territories of death, to those of life, because we unfeignedly love the brethren*; as they are the children of God as well as ourselves, and the members of one body with us. *He that loveth not [his] brother, can have no good principle, but necessarily abideth in spiritual death, and must for ever continue in that miserable state, if the frame and temper of his mind be not entirely changed.*

And this you may easily apprehend, if you consider, that *every one who hateth his brother, is a murderer*; and were it not for the restraint of human laws, that private malice which is harboured in his thoughts would produce, as it did in the instance of Cain, actual murder. *And ye assuredly know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, nor can any person of that detestable character enter into the celestial kingdom, the region of perfect love.* Jesus Christ, who reigns in that blessed world, has given us various and numberless proofs of an unparalleled charity; and it is *in this*, above all the other instances of it, that we know by experience the greatness of his love, *as he hath laid down his life for us*<sup>b</sup>; and we in imitation of such an example, *ought to be ready to lay down [our] lives for the brethren*<sup>c</sup>, when the

tioned as equivalent to Acts xx. 28, in which, as he who laid down his life for us, is God, as well as man, God is said to have done that which the man united to him did. But it is not to be denied, that many copies, which I here follow, read only *as he* instead of *as he*: hereby we perceive his love. And there are many places, where the relative evidently refers to a remote antecedent. Compare Heb. vii. 2. note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> *I lay down our lives for the brethren.*] That is, when the life and happiness of many are concerned, we ought to be willing to sacrifice our own. If one only were



1567. good of his church, or of any number of our fellow-Christians requires it. And if we ought to be willing to die for the good of others, how much more to relieve them in any of those necessities, which require us only to impart to them a little of our substance? *Whosoever therefore hath the good things of the present world, and when he seeth his brother in necessity, shutteth up his bowels from him; so that he will not impart any thing out of his own abundance for his relief; how dwelleth the love of God in him, or with what face can he presume to call himself a Christian.*

John  
III. 17.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 *My little children, let me speak freely to you on this head, and let us not love merely in word or in tongue, not content ourselves with any external and complimentary expressions of regard; but let our actions prove the sincerity of our professions, and show that we love in deed and*

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

19 *in truth. And in this we know that we are of the truth, and that we are real Christians; and in the consciousness of this shall assure our hearts before him, when we draw nigh in the*

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 *exercises of devotion. For if our own heart condemn us of any evil which we secretly indulge, while we preserve our characters in the sight of men unsullied, we may well be thrown into terror and anxiety; knowing that God is infinitely greater than our heart, and knoweth all things, without exception; so as continually to view numberless follies, which we never observed, or have entirely forgotten, and numberless aggravations attending each, which it was impossible for us fully and distinctly to conceive.*

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 *But, beloved, if our heart condemn us not, but we have the testimony of our consciences before him, as to the sincerity of our repentance and faith, and the integrity of our general walk and conversation, [then] have we that confidence and freedom of speech before God, in our addresses to him, which nothing else could give us,*

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

\*to be rescued on such terms, the argument would in a great measure fail, unless that one were of so great importance, that in dying for him we died for many; and the heathens themselves saw the ob-

ligation to submit to death in such a case, though they were unacquainted with that noble motive to which the apostle here refers. Compare Cicero de officiis, lib. I. cap. iii. p. 34.

*We should love one another.*

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

and which it is impossible we should have, while we know that we deal deceitfully in any instance, either with him or our fellow-creatures. And we know, that *whatever we ask, we shall receive of him*, if subservient to our truest good, because we are conscious of a prevailing care to keep his commandments, and to do the things which we have reason to apprehend are *pleasing in his sight*; which he, as the righteous God, will be pleased with, when proceeding from a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and attended with those humble regards to him, which the imperfections of our own obedience, in its best estate, will require. *And this is his great com-*

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

*mand, That we should believe in the name of his dear Son Jesus Christ*, and endeavour to grow more in that blessed principle of faith in him; and that we should unfeignedly and cordially love one another, as he hath so strongly and affectionately charged us to do. *And this is the* 24 true way to have that communion with God, to which I expressed, in the beginning of my epistle, such a desire to introduce you: for *he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he*, that is, God, *abideth in that man: and in this we farther know, that he abideth in us*, by such an intimate union, even from the spirit which he hath given us, and which is the token and effect of his habitation in us; producing in our souls by his gracious operation, the image of God, and forming us to an intimacy with, and nearness to him.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

IMPROVEMENT.

O THAT the Divine Spirit which God hath given to dwell in *Ver* believers, and by which he himself resides in them, may teach 11, us more effectually this great lesson of love, which is so agreeable to the purposes for which he was conferred! Let us abhor the temper of Cain, as much as we abhor the actions it produced, and dread the doom they incurred. As for that hatred of 12 the world, which in a steady adherence to our duty may probably fall to our lot, let it by no means surprise or discourage us: It is surely enough to support our spirits under the malice and outrage of a wicked world, that if we are steady and consistent Christians, *we may know, that we are passed from death to life.* O blessed transition! O the adorable riches of Divine grace to 14 which it is owing! May the ardour of our love to our bre-

- then render this happy change more and more apparent; and may this Christian benevolence be so ardent in our hearts, as to make us willing, when certain duty requires it, even to lay down our lives for them: having been ourselves distinguished with the like token of the love of our Divine Master, who spared not his own life for us; and O, what are even thousands of our lives in comparison of his! And shall we then, while our brethren in the
- 16 Lord are in necessity, be tepid of our substance? When we are surrounded with plenty, shall we be unwilling to impart a
- 17 little of our abundance for their relief, or content ourselves with the charity of words, which cost us nothing, while we withhold the things that are needful for them? How will such shameful, detestable hypocrisy disgrace all our pretensions to the love of God: but let us treat all hypocrisy either towards God or man, with detestation and abhorrence. Let us love, not only in word and in profession, but in deed and in truth, and rather choose that our actions should exceed our engagements, than disappoint in any instance the expectations we have raised.
- 18
- 19 Of what infinite importance is it to have confidence towards God in all our addresses to his heavenly Majesty! And if we desire this to be the case, let us reverence our own consciences, avoiding every thing which would cause our hearts to condemn
- 20 us, in the presence of him who is *greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*. And while we rejoice in this, that they do not condemn us, let us be very careful that we examine them thoroughly, that we be not imposed on by a false answer, as it is to be feared many, through a superficial inquiry, are, whose expectations are the most sanguine, and whose pretensions are the loudest. Let us remember this great summary of Christian
- 21 duty, *that we believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and*
- 22 *that we keep his commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in his sight*. An obedience, springing from such a faith, a faith, verified by such an obedience, will give us a comfortable hope, that our prayers shall be accepted of God now, and our persons accepted hereafter to eternal life. Amen.

## S E C T. VI.

*The apostle cautions the Christian converts against being deceived by seducing spirits; and directs them how they may distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*

1 John IV. 1—12.

1 JOHN IV. 1.

IT is necessary, my beloved, that in the circumstances in which we are placed, I should cau-

1 JOHN IV. 1.

B E L O V E D, be-

## *Many false prophets were in the world :*

lieve not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Herby know ye the Spirit of God : every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God ; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and

tion you against credulously submitting to every one who pretends a Divine inspiration for what he says : *believe not therefore every pretended spirit<sup>a</sup> : but make trial of the spirits, whether they be indeed of God or not : for, it is certain, that many false prophets are gone forth into the world, boasting a Divine mission, and thereby laying snares for the souls of men, with such artifice, that might, as our Lord expresses it, (Mat. xxiv. 24.) deceive the very elect, if it were possible. Now in this ye know, and may<sup>2</sup> distinguish the spirit of God, which is the spirit of truth, from that of error : every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh<sup>b</sup>, that pays a becoming deference to his authority, and the Divine discoveries which he hath made, is of God : there cannot, in the general, be any better attestation of any spirit than this, that it tends, in its agency and operations, to promote the honour of the great Redeemer. And you<sup>3</sup> may, on the other hand, be sure of this, that every pretended spirit of revelation, that doth not confess and do homage to Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, is not of God : and indeed this is, on the contrary, the very [spirit] of antichrist<sup>c</sup>, of whom you have heard in the Divine oracles and predictions which our blessed Lord delivered concerning this last time that he is coming, and is now in some measure already in the world. But, my dear children, ye are of*

<sup>a</sup> *Believe not every spirit.*] Many pretended to the character of the Messiah, and others, in an extraordinary manner to be sent and inspired of God ; and thus they did with a view of turning away Christians from their faith and hope. The apostle here, by a short turn of argument, demonstrates that they were indeed impostors from this very attempt.

<sup>b</sup> *That confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh.*] So the words ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, may very well be rendered : and indeed they must be so in this connection, for the bare confession of Christ's incarnation would not have been sufficient to have cleared them from the suspicion of being impostors. To confess Jesus Christ, seems to mean, not barely professing some kind

of regard to him, but yielding a regular consistent homage, and, as it were, harmonizing and falling in with his design.

<sup>c</sup> *This is the spirit of antichrist.*] From hence some have argued, that the Pope cannot be antichrist, because he confesses Christ ; and that it must necessarily be some entirely opposing person or sect, and which does not bear the Christian name : but the interpretation above obviates this objection ; for it is certain popery is an usurpation entirely inconsistent with a due homage to Christ, and founded upon principles most opposite to those of his government and religion. It is said to have been already in the world, as the ambitious, imposing, persecuting spirit, which is the very essence of antichristianism, did then greatly prevail.

## Whereas the apostles were of God.

**God, and have overcome them, in all their snares and delusions<sup>d</sup>, because greater and more powerful by far is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.** the Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostasy, and for all his confederates. *They* of whom I have now been speaking, *are of the world*, and they know how to manage their affairs in a manner which will be pleasing to it *therefore they speak as of the world*, as taking their instructions from it, they give their followers worldly hopes and expectations, *and the world greedily hears them*, and drinks in their fallacious maxims, to the unspeakable detriment of the interests of true religion. Whereas, on the contrary, *we are of God*, and have approved ourselves to be so, by such irresistible evidence, that I may now venture to say, that *he who knoweth God*, and experiences the governing influence of Divine fear and love, *heareth and regardeth us*, but *he who is not of God, doth not attentively and obediently hear us*, and by rejecting our testimony, attended with such evidence, proves himself destitute of all true religion. After such a series of miracles, as have been wrought in confirmation of the gospel, and other proof attending it in their days, it may be laid down as a test, so that *by this we may sufficiently know*, and discern between *the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*, as the

have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world

They are of the world therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them

For we know that he that knoweth God teacheth us, but that is not of God he teacheth not us. He by whom we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error

<sup>d</sup> *Ye—hence overcome them* } That is, your doctrine have prevailed against some who deserve the name of anti-christs, as undoubtedly did who opposed the Christian interest in some measure did, in as you have the true miraculous gifts of the spirit, to which they falsely pretend it is soon seen, that the advantage is clearly on your side

<sup>e</sup> *He who heareth God heareth us* } Bishop Bull thinks the meaning of this is, "Regard our temper and conduct, and compare it with that of those who oppose us, and you will find a carnal principle continually prevailing in them, and a spiritual principle governing us in consequence of which you

"may know as surely that we are of God, and that they are of the world." I rather think as Archbishop Tillotson has stated it, (Vol III p 101) He said is the Christian religion is now constantly demonstrated that it might be made a test by which other pretences might be tried, and to those who have received a full evidence, it must be so. If the Jews were directed to judge and be obliged to condemn, a pretended prophet, as it of old, proved an impostor, it is tempted to turn them aside from the revelation which God had given by Moses. Deut. xiii 1—

## *Every one who loveth, is born of God.*

one receives, and the other rejects, this Divine system.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.

But think it not enough speculatively to admit its authority. Let it be your great care practically to acknowledge it; and especially to the purposes of mutual benevolence. Yes, my beloved, let us love one another; for love is as really from God, as truth itself; and every one who loveth, every one in whose heart this Divine principle reigns and triumphs over the selfish and contrary passions, shows by it that he is born of God, by his regenerating and transforming grace, and that he truly knoweth God; he makes it appear, that he judges rightly of God's nature and will; and that his acquaintance with him has made deep and powerful impressions on his heart. Whereas he who loveth not, what-

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love.

ever he may pretend, hath not truly known God; for God is love, its great fountain and exemplar; he recommends it by his law, and produces and cherishes it by his influences: and the due contemplation of him will naturally inflame our hearts with love to his Divine Majesty, and to our fellow-creatures for his sake, whose creatures they are. And in this great instance is the

9 In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

love of God, of which I now speak, when I say that God is himself love, in the most illustrious manner manifested, and displayed in and towards us, that God sent Jesus his only-begotten and well-beloved Son into the world, that we, condemned and miserable sinners, might live through him; that the sentence of death to which we were obnoxious, might be reversed, that we might be quickened to a principle of spiritual life, and so conducted to the possession of life everlasting. Yes, Sirs, I must repeat it again, that your hearts, and my own, may be the more deeply affected with it, herein is love, not indeed that we loved God, for we were, on the contrary in a state of enmity to him, in which unsolicited and untouched by his love and grace, we should have persisted and perished; but that

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, But that he

[Let us love one another.] It is reported, that when the apostle John was grown old, and past preaching, he used to be led to the church at Ephesus, and only say these words to the people, Lit-

tle children, love one another. And the importance of the argument by which he here enforces love, justifies the repetition of it so frequently.

John 15  
 10 *he loved us, and in boundless compassion to our necessities and our miseries, sent his Son [to be] a propitiation for our sins; to make atonement to his injured justice for our offences, and so to introduce us on honourable terms to his favour.*

11 And let me make this important inference from it, my beloved, if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another, in imitation of his Divine example, from a sense of the happy state into which we are brought, and in gratitude to him

12 for so inestimable a favour? And the inference has the greater weight, as *no man hath ever seen God*, or can see him, since he is in his own nature invisible, and possessed of such essential perfections, that it is impossible that any expressions of love and duty from any of his creatures should in the least degree increase his happiness. But as he is the great fountain of benevolence, if we love one another, it appears that *God dwelleth in us*, and that *his love is perfected in us*; for this is the best proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THE spirit of error has been working, in some measure, in all ages of the church: nor are we to wonder, if having infested that of the apostles, it be transmitted to our own. It is necessary, therefore to try the spirits, whether they be of God; and we may safely try them by the homage they pay to Christ; and this not merely to his name, but to the genius of his religion, and to the great standard of it, which he hath left upon record in his word, that it might not be that uncertain thing which the fancies or traditions of fallible men might have rendered it. Antichristian principles and powers have arisen, but God has enabled, and he will enable the remnant of his people to conquer them; for *the spirit in them is greater than that which is in the world*. That they hearken to seducers as they accommodate their doctrine to the prevailing lusts and passions; but let us remember that the gospel is now established as a test, and may we admit, or reject, all human teachings, as they agree, or disagree with it.

If we read and hear it to any valuable purpose, it will teach us to love one another: that great lesson of our Divine Master, with relation to which we have *line upon line, and precept upon precept*. If we value ourselves in any degree upon knowing God, let us give this proof of it, without which all our most sub-

*They who have been brought to God by his love.*

tile speculations or debates concerning his nature and perfections will be utterly vain. And that we may attain to this, let us frequently contemplate that incomparable display of his love towards us, in sending his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Let us daily consider our lives as derived from that great act of mercy and grace; and that it is through Christ alone, as thus given us of God, that we can obtain and secure life eternal, since in him we receive the only appointed propitiation for those sins, which would otherwise have obstructed the passage of all good to us; even from the great eternal fountain of felicity. He hath prevented us with the blessings of his goodness; we did not love him, but he first loved us. O that this love on his part, may produce the warmest returns on ours! and let us testify the sincerity of this affection, by remembering how it ought to influence our hearts to benevolence as well as devotion. And as we cannot see God at any time, nor extend any act of beneficence to him, let us see his image with due regard in every Christian, and in some degree in every human creature, that we may express our love to him, by doing good to them for his sake.

## SECT. VII.

*The apostle further urges the excellence of love, as a substantial proof of our knowing God, and dwelling in him; and as bringing the greatest honour to God, and affording the truest composure and confidence to the soul. I John IV. 13, to the end.*

I JOHN IV. 13.

**H**ERE BY know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

I JOHN IV. 13.

**I** HAVE been mentioning love as an argument of our union to God; and I must now add, that in this also we know, that we abide in him, and that he dwelleth in us; because he hath given to us the communication of his Spirit, which operating in us by its gracious influences, and as it were, the mark of God upon us, and thereby assures us that he owns us as his, and is become our God: And animated and sealed by this Spirit, as we have seen and known by manifest evidence ourselves, so we courageously testify to others, how hazardous soever the testimony that testimony may be, that the great almighty Father of all hath sent Jesus the Son, under the high character of the Saviour of the world; and that it is in, and by him alone, how proud soever the infidel world may reject and dispute.



SECT. Him, that eternal salvation can be obtained.

VII.

1 John  
iv. 15.

*Whoever, in a steady and uniform manner, shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God,*<sup>a</sup> main-

taining this profession of faith with resolution and zeal, and acting in conformity to it, gives the happiest proof that *God dwelleth in him, and that he dwelleth in God*: there is a blessed union between God and his soul: so that it is, in the language of scripture, (Isa. lvii. 15.) the habitation of God, and he may be said to be, as to his affections and hopes, with God in heaven, and shall ere long, in his complete person,

16 reside there. *And we have known, and firmly believed the love which God hath unto us; for as we have again and again taught you, and know not how to cease inculcating it, God is himself love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,*<sup>b</sup> this is the bond of union, and the pledge of its perpetuity. (Com-

17 pare ver. 8, and 12.) *And herein is love perfected in us, that notwithstanding all our acknowledged and lamented imperfections, we may have boldness and confidence in the great day of universal judgment,*<sup>c</sup> *in that as he our Father and our God is, so are we in some prevailing degree, even while we reside in this world, so far as the imperfections of that mortal life, to which we are here confined, will admit.*

18 *And happy are they, who are arrived to such a temper and character as this; for there is no servile and abject fear in love, but perfect love casteth out such fear from the soul, in which it*

15 Whosoever hath confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world

18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth

<sup>a</sup> *Whoever shall confess, &c.* Bishop Hopkins accounts for this, and a like passages, by observing, that in the primitive times, there were no temporal inducements to embrace Christianity, and consequently most of the professors of it acted upon conscience, and it might be charitably hoped they were indeed regenerate. See his Works, p. 520.

<sup>b</sup> *Dwelleth in God, and God in him* ] Perhaps when John wrote this epistle, he might refer to that excellent prayer of our blessed Lord, which he has recorded in his gospel, and to such passages of it as John viii. 21, 22.

<sup>c</sup> *In the day of judgment.* Some by this phrase understand the day in which

Christians were judged, as it had been said, The perfection of love is, when it induces us to maintain the cause of Christ by prayer and persons, that we may be conformed to him, whose life was in a manner a continued series of suffering where is the violent fear of death, which where it prevails, is a tormenting passion, is inconsistent with the perfect love of Christ. This is the sense which Dr Bates gives to this passage. Bates's Works, p. 924. But the day of judgment has generally a different signification from what this explanation gives it, and therefore I choose to paraphrase the words, after the manner in which they are usually understood.

out fear; because he that feareth, is not perfect in love, *resides*. And this is a very desirable effect; *because fear hath torment*, it throws the mind into a most uneasy situation; *but he that feareth, is not made perfect in love*. Study therefore to increase more and more in that noble affection of love to God; and you will find your self enjoyment rising in proportion to it. And reflect upon this with all humility, that if we do indeed experience any thing of that Divine principle in our hearts, we must freely acknowledge, that *we love him, because he first loved us*. He hath not only given us natures capable of those sublime actings, and poured in upon us, from their first original, numberless providential bounties, but hath also appointed his Son, to lay a foundation for our happiness in his own blood, and his spirit, to diffuse that grace in our hearts, by which they are formed to every sentiment of pious gratitude.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

And let this also be remembered, as of the last importance, that *if any one say, I love God, and hate his brother, how high soever his pretences to devotion may be, and to whatever fervour he may carry his zeal; he is a liar*; for it is impossible that the love of God should be sincere in the soul; which is destitute of this brotherly affection; as will appear, if you consider what peculiar advantages we have for engaging our hearts towards those with whom we are conversant; *for how can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen?*<sup>d</sup> The invisible nature of the Divine Being, is, in this respect, an obstacle which our weak and carnal minds cannot be expected easily to conquer; And it is certain, that the neglect of this beneyolent disposition would be an high instance of disobedience to him, since *we have this express commandment from him, that he who loveth God, and profess*

20 If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love

<sup>d</sup> How can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God, &c.] Mr. Howe observes, that the apostle seems to take it for granted, that we are more disposed to the love of our fellow creatures than to the love of God. Mr. Seed has charmingly illustrated this text; (Ser. Vol. I p. 290;) and observes, that we rise

to the love of God from the love of our fellow-creatures; as to the knowledge of God, by the knowledge of the creatures. Hardly any text was ever more fully illustrated than this, in those posthumous sermons of the great Mr. Howe, which were published by Mr. Fletcher.

SECT.

VII.

eth himself religious, *should also love his brother.* his brother also  
 And God hath hereby, in effect declared, that  
 he will treat those as his enemies, who pretend  
 to devout zeal, while they are destitute of brotherly love.

1 John  
 IV. 21.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

THAT all these repeated exhortations may not be entirely in vain, let us now call our hearts to a deep and affectionate contemplation of the astonishing love of God, that he hath sent even  
 Verse 14 his son to be the Saviour of the world, according to the testimony of this Divine herald, who beheld his glory, and witnessed it to be such a glory, as became the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.)

Let us think of the world as lost, of the whole race of rational creatures in it as perishing, as going down to eternal perdition. But a Saviour is provided: and O, what a Saviour? The Son of God, that almighty Deliverer, to whom our salvation was dearer than his own life. So dear, that he was willing to be invested with mortal flesh, in order that he might be capable of enduring pain and death for our redemption. Have we not herein seen  
 16 and known the love of God to us? That love, wherewith he has so graciously prevented us; for surely nothing can be more apparent than this, that if we do indeed love him sincerely and  
 19 faithfully, it is because he hath first loved us. And therefore, instead of boasting of our love to him, as if we could make him our debtor, let us humbly acknowledge that he is the great Original and support of that beatifying affection of the human mind; and that our obligations to him are great, in proportion to the degree in which we feel it working in us. Let us be en-  
 15 couraged boldly to confess Christ as the Son of God. Let us seek after more perfect love to him, and to the Father, as that which tends to make the mind happy by casting out every tor-  
 17 menting passion, and to establish it in an humble boldness amidst the most awful prospects. It is matter of deep lamentation, that  
 20 our spirits should be so degenerate, as that while we are strongly impressed by sensible objects, we should be the less inclined to love the blessed God, because he is an invisible being.

Let us adore his goodness, that in condescension to our weakness, he hath made himself visible in the person of his Son; and as Christ has constituted our brethren, in some degree, his representatives to receive, as in his name, the tokens of our kindness  
 21 and affection, let us be studious by our love to them, and particularly to the poor among them, who have peculiarly this honour; let us, I say, be studious to approve the sincerity of that love to him, which we so universally profess, and the absence of which were so inexcusably criminal.

SECT. VIII.

*The apostle further discourses of the character of those who are born of God, particularly describing them as lovers of Christ, as conquerors of the world, and as courageously maintaining the gospel, on the witnesses to which, both in heaven and on earth, he more especially enlarges. 1 John V, 1—12.*

1 JOHN V. 1.

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 JOHN V. 1.

HAVING been discoursing of the privileges of the children of God, let me a little farther illustrate, and remind you of the great essentials of their character, that you may judge the better of your own concern in what is said. And here nothing is of more importance than to observe, that every one who truly believeth that Jesus is the Christ, so as to have his heart duly affected with the belief, without which faith does not deserve its name, is born of God: he is brought to that Divine temper by the influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and in consequence of this he may be assured of his adoption. And every one who loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten by him: we naturally love the children of our common friends, and much more will the children of our heavenly Father be dear to us, if we bear a becoming affection to him. And we may take the same truth likewise the other way, and say, that in this we know that we love the children of God, if we love God, and keep his commandments.

SECT. VIII.  
1 John V. 1.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

[Is born of God.] It is probable the apostle may here refer to the vain boasts which the Jews made of being the children of God, while they set Christ at defiance, and poured the greatest infamy on his name and cause. Mr. Locke quotes this place to prove that this was the only fundamental of the gospel; but it is evident, this proposition may be understood in very different senses; and consequently there is no room to lay all the stress that he supposes may be laid on such an expression.

[In this we know that we love the children of God, &c.] Dr. Clarke supposes this clause to be transposed, and that it should be read, "By this we know that we love God, and keep his commandments, be-

cause we love his children." Posth. Sermon. Vol. II. p. 102. To the common reading it has been objected, that the medium is more obscure, than the thing to be learnt from it. Dr. Bates answers, that the apostle speaks concerning our knowing that our love to the brethren is of the true Christian stamp: now a strong internal principle of love to God may be more self-evident to the mind, as less in danger of being confounded with a merely human affection, or benevolent instinct. Bates's Works, p. 695. Some have queried, whether it might not be translated, *Hereby, even in that we love the children of God, do we know that we love God, and keep his commandments.*

SECT.

VIII.

1 John

v. 2.

For certainly if our love to the children of God arise from truly religious motives, it will be an uniform thing, and all the other precepts of God will have a suitable influence upon our hearts and lives; whereas any pretended benevolence of temper, which leaves us rebels to the authority of the common father of the family, is a mere natural impulse, and deserves not the noble name of brotherly love.

Wonder not, that I insist so much on the influence of religious principles on the life and conversation. *For this is the love of God*, this is the great evidence we are to give of it, *that we impartially keep all his commandments*, without allowing ourselves in the violation of any one of them. *And to a mind influenced by true love, his commandments are not grievous*: as they are all most equitable, reasonable, and gracious in themselves, all adapted to promote the true happiness of our lives, so we shall find, that fervent love will make

them all pleasant and delightful to us. *Because*, whereas the great obstruction to keeping God's commandments is the influence of worldly motives and considerations on the mind, *whatsoever is born of God*, every son and daughter of his, not excepting even the feeblest, *conquers the world*, and would despise and trample upon all the glories of universal empire, if opposed to the favour of his heavenly Father. *And this is the great victory that conquers the world*, the grand triumphant principle which accomplishes things which appear so incredible, [even] our firm faith in the great articles of the Christian religion; particularly, that Christ is the Son of God, that he came into the world to redeem us from its lusts and vanities, and that he will assuredly conduct all his people to seats of infinitely greater and nobler felicity.

And indeed, as this is the happiness of true Christians, so only of them; for *who is he that conquers the world, except it be he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* The great principles peculiar to our Divine religion, a sense of redeeming love, and the prospect of such a sublime and perpetual happiness as the gospel opens upon us, can alone be sufficient to teach us to triumph over these transitory vanities, and

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

to establish a uniform character, superior to the variety of temptations with which we can be assaulted; while the boasted triumphs of others, upon meaner principles, have been very partial and imperfect, and they have evidently been subdued by one vanity, while they have gloried in despising another.

6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

This Jesus, of whom we have now been speaking, is he who came by water, and by blood; even Jesus the Christ, whose great design it was both to cleanse and purify his people, and to make an atonement to God for their sins. He came not by water only, did not only instruct men in the purest morals, or set them the most perfect and complete example; but by water and blood. He shed his most precious blood to expiate our offences, and God gave, as it were, a sensible intimation of these united purposes, when there came out of his wounded side a stream of blood and water, which descended in such a manner, as that each might evidently be distinguished from the other. And the Spirit is that which witnesseth, the extraordinary communication of the Spirit to his servants is the most glorious attestation of all; for we well know, that the Spirit is truth; and when we consider the wonderful manner of its interposition, we can no longer doubt of the truth of whatever shall be attested by such an authority.

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Fa-

And indeed, when I consider this, I may say, that whereas the law admitted the concurrent testimony of two witnesses as valid, we have, as it were, a double trinity of witnesses, one in heaven, and the other on earth, to support this most momentous truth. For there are three, who bear witness to it,<sup>d</sup> [in heaven; the Father, by whom the scheme of our salvation

<sup>c</sup> [Came by water and blood.] I think it a great mistake of Mr. Cradock and some others, to imagine that this relates to eternal washing and Jewish sacrifices.

<sup>d</sup> [There are three who bear witness, &c.] As it would be altogether unfit to introduce into such short notes as these are intended to be, a critical dissertation upon the authority of this celebrated text; I shall content myself with referring to what so many learned persons as have en-

gaged in the controversy, have written on each side; but I thought myself obliged to intimate such a remaining doubt at least, concerning its authenticity, as I have done by including it within crotchets. I am persuaded the words contain an important truth; but whether they have been added by some, or omitted by others, contrary to the original copy, I will not pretend to determine.

# 312 *If we receive the witness of men, much more that of God :*

SECT.

VIII.

I John

V. 7.

was originally projected, and who revealed it so early to the church by the prophets; *the Divine Word*, whose great business it was, by such humiliations, labours, and sufferings, to bring it into execution; and *the holy Spirit*,<sup>e</sup> who seals and applies it to believers; and *these three are one*, as in the agreement of their testimony, so likewise in the perfections of their nature, and each worthy of those Divine honours, which cannot be communicated to any creature. *And there are three on earth who bear witness,* *the Spirit*, sent down from heaven in its sanctifying and miraculous operations, which still continue to produce the noblest effect; and *the water of baptism*, and *the representation made of Christ's blood in the sacramental wine*,<sup>f</sup> which are intended, throughout all ages, to keep up the remembrance of these wonderful facts, and to bear, as it were, their testimony to this mysterious Person, who united in himself humanity and deity, and came by water, and by blood; and *these three agree in one*: they join to advance the same end, by establishing the gospel in the world. And *if we receive the testimony of men*, which in many cases we cannot, without the most palpable absurdity, reject, surely *the testimony of God*, is worthy of infinitely greater credit; for *this is the testimony of God, which he hath witnessed concerning his Son*, recommending him thereby to our most dutiful and obedient regard; that by a firm faith in him, and adherence to him, we may conquer the world, and all the enemies of our salvation. *He, who upon this testimony, believeth in the Son of God*, hath not only an external evidence to produce, which may suffice for the conviction and con-

ther, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son

10 He that believeth on the Son of

<sup>e</sup> *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.*] *The Father*. Mat. iii. 16, 17; xvii. 5; John xii. 28. *The Word* himself, Acts vii. 55, 56; ix. 3, 4; Rev. i. 10, &c. *The Holy Ghost*, John i. 32, 33.

<sup>f</sup> *The water and the blood.*] By the water, Mr. Jeſſus understands the baptism of Christ, and the miracles which were wrought on that occasion, as the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven; and by the blood, the death of Christ, which he willingly suffered, and demonstrated

thereby, that he was an impostor, especially as he predicted so many extraordinary circumstances attending it. See his Review of the Controversy with Collins. Others interpret the blood here spoken of, of the blood of the martyrs shed in confirmation of Christianity, and the water, of the purity of the lives of Christians. I confess it is a difficult text, but on the whole, prefer the sense given in the paraphrase.

God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

demnation of the unbelieving world, but from the time in which he experiences the efficacy of his faith, *hath also the witness within himself*: the happy change it makes in the whole state of his soul, manifests the excellency and reality of its object. But *he that believeth not God*, offers him the grossest and most insufferable affront, for he in effect *makes him a liar*, charges him with attesting the most notorious falsehood in the most solemn manner; *because he hath not believed in the testimony which God hath testified concerning his Son* by so many prophecies, and other miraculous interpositions, to demonstrate the truth of his mission. So that if this may be rejected, it cannot be conceived how he should ever be able to give any convincing proof, that he testifies any thing at all. *And this is*, in one word, *the substance* and abridgement of this *testimony*, that the blessed *God hath*, in his infinite condescension and bounty, *given unto us* the promises of *eternal life*; and *this life is in his Son*; purchased by him, and laid up in him, to be bestowed according to his pleasure; and therefore only to be obtained through him. So that *he who hath* an interest in *the Son* by a lively and operative faith, *hath this eternal life*, in the sure pledges and beginnings of it in his own heart, and shall shortly enter on the complete enjoyment, though in himself acknowledged to be ever so unworthy of it; and *he who hath not* an interest in the *Son of God*, *hath not life*, whatever proud conceit he may entertain of his own merits and excellencies; but, on the contrary, remains exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, and under a sentence of eternal death.

11 And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son:

12 He that hath the Son, hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

[*Hath the witness within himself.*] Some have considered and explained this, as if the meaning were, that every Christian did in those days receive some miraculous proofs of his religion, by some communication of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; in consequence of which he might, by looking within himself, know the certainty of the gospel. But I

think this assertion incapable of being proved, either from this passage or any other; and can prefer no sense of this celebrated text so that which Dr. Watts has so largely established and illustrated in his sermons upon it; to which therefore I refer my reader with the utmost satisfaction. Watts's Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon. i.—iii.



IMPROVEMENT.

LECT. LET us regard the grand question, on which our life, our  
 VIII. eternal life, is suspended ! I mean, *whether we have, or have not  
 the Son of God ?* Let us then examine into this important matter  
 12 with the greatest attention. Let us hearken to, and receive the  
 testimony of God, as comprehended in this one word, that God  
 14 hath given even to us, dying and perishing men, *eternal life ;  
 and this life is in his Son.* Let us receive this transcendent gift  
 with all humility and thankfulness ; and so much the rather, as  
 10 it is given us in him. By firmly believing this, we shall con-  
 quer the world, and gain a victory of an infinitely different and  
 more exalted nature, than they who are strangers to Christ, or  
 4 who reject him, ever have done, or can possibly do.

1 May our stedfast faith in him furnish us with a substantial  
 attestation that we are born of God ; and may we prove it to be  
 sincere, by *loving the children of God, and by keeping all his  
 commandments.* We must surely acknowledge, that his com-  
 mandments are reasonable ; and if we have a genuine love to  
 God existing in our hearts, it will render the observance of  
 8 them pleasant and delightful. And if we are not possessed of  
 that evidence of love, which arises from a disposition to obe-  
 dience, let us remember, he hath fairly and frequently warned  
 us, that no other expressions of love, how fervent and pathetic  
 6 soever, will be accepted or allowed by him. That our faith may  
 \* be confirmed, and our love awakened, let us often look to  
 Christ, as coming by water and by blood. Let us meditate on  
 that mysterious stream of blood and water, which came forth  
 from his wounded side. Let us solemnly remind ourselves of  
 the *baptismal water*, in which we were washed, and of the *sa-  
 cred cup, the communion of the blood of Christ*, referring to this  
 great important event. And while we are contemplating  
 the memorial of his humility, let us also consider him as one  
 7 with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and as each of the sacred  
 three join in their testimony to the truth of the gospel, and join  
 their kind offices for supplying to us the invaluable blessings of  
 it, let us joyfully ascribe *glory to each, world without end.*  
*Amen.*

SECT. IX.

*The apostle concludes his epistle ; declaring its general design  
 to be the confirmation of their faith ; and reminding them of  
 the encouragement they had to hope, that their prayers should  
 be heard, for themselves, and for others, who had not sinned  
 unpardonably. And he then adds a reflection on the happy  
 difference which the knowledge of God in Christ made be-*

St. John wrote, that they might believe on the Son of God.

tween them, and an ignorant and wicked world. 1 John V. 13, to the end.

1 JOHN V. 13.

THESE things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1 JOHN V. 13.

AND now, to draw towards a conclusion; *these things have I written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God, to confirm your faith, and establish your joy, that ye may know, that, if your attachment to him is of the right kind, you have, in consequence of it, an interest in eternal life; and that, this hope, operating to produce the substantial fruits of genuine and universal obedience, ye may yet more fully and stedfastly believe on the mighty and Divine name of the Son of God.*<sup>a</sup> Then you may be assured of the certain truth of his religion, in proportion to the degree in which you inwardly experience its noble effects; and may in consequence of this, keep your hearts continually fixed upon him, in the many important views in which faith exhibits him.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

15 And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

*And this is the confidence which we have towards him, as our prevalent intercessor and mighty Saviour at God's right-hand: that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us<sup>b</sup> graciously: that he observes and takes notice of all our petitions. And we are sure his is not an ineffectual notice; for if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know, as a farther consequence, since he is ever able to carry all his gracious purposes into immediate execution; that we shall certainly have an accomplishment of those petitions which we have asked of him.*<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.] It is manifest, the apostle does not in this epistle, to establish their faith, produce the evidences of Christianity, and argue upon them. But the good dispositions, which his whole discourse has a tendency to promote, would certainly have a strong influence to confirm their faith; as such dispositions would appear to be the effect of the gospel; and as an ardent zeal in the teachers of the gospel to promote them, was a strong confirmation of their being faithful witnesses to the great facts which had before been received upon their credit. I look upon this as a strong text to prove, in opposition to what Dr. Whitby has advanced,

that Christians are urged in the New Testament, to believe in Jesus Christ.

<sup>b</sup> That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.] Archbishop Tillotson supposes this refers particularly to the apostles. (Compare Mat. xviii. 18, 19; John xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23, 24.) But so few of the apostles could be concerned in this advice of St. John, and there are so many promises of the answer of prayer scattered up and down in the Old and New Testament, (see Dr. Clark, on the Promises, cap. iii. § vi.) that I would by no means thus confine the interpretation.

<sup>c</sup> If we know that he heareth—we shall have the petitions.] Hearing cannot, in

supposing, as I said before, they are agreeable to his will; and it is always his will, that his people should be truly happy, and be supplied with every necessary good.

1 John  
v. 15.

16 And let me now add one precaution, with regard to the cases, in which it may be proper to remember offenders in our prayers: *if any one see his brother commit a sin [which is] not unto death*, that is, any sin, but that which is marked out in the awful words of our Lord Jesus Christ as unpardonable; *he shall ask, and may hope that, through the Divine goodness, he shall give him life*: he may cheerfully expect, that God will return in mercy to those who *sin not unto death*. *There is indeed a sin, [that is,] unto death*, I mean such an apostasy from Christianity, as is attended with blaspheming the operations of the Spirit of God, and ascribing them to Satan; and *I say not, that he*, whose aid may be requested on such a sad occasion, *should pray concerning that*; for Christ has told us it shall never be forgiven in this world, or the next. And as nothing but a miracle of Divine grace, never to be expected, can recover a person in such circumstances, it is better to wave the petition, how much soever we may be disposed to lament the misery of the un-

happy creature who has fallen into it. *Every in-*

16 If any man see his brother sin, a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighte

the preceding verse, signify merely *knowing what we say*; for then there would be no reason to limit the assertion to our asking any thing according to his will; and it may seem, that if we take it for answering our petitions, it is a mere tautology: it is therefore necessary to interpret the former clause of *taking notice of us*, the other of *operating* in consequence of that notice. The almighty power of God to fulfil all his gracious purposes in favour of his people, seems to be the medium on which the inference is grounded.

<sup>d</sup> *I say not that he should pray concerning that.* It seems to be intended as a brand set on a person who had been guilty of the sin here specified, that he was not to be prayed for by his converted fellow-Christians. Some indeed would interpret this sin of the more heinous kind of offences punishable with death by human laws: but I can see no sort of reason for refusing

the charity of our prayers to persons in such circumstances. Others think it refers to the case of illness; but there is no express mention of it here; and it seems to have been taken for granted without reason, that this text is parallel to James v. 14, 15. It is certain, that illness in case of a capital crime, would not delay the execution. The popish distinction between mortal and venial sins will however appear to have no foundation in this text upon the interpretation we have given, or indeed upon any we have mentioned. The chief difficulty remaining is, how it could be known, that the apostasy in question was attended with such circumstances as made it the unpardonable sin? Where it was most difficult to distinguish, the gift of discerning spirits might infallibly decide it; where it was dubious, charity would incline to the milder extreme; and conditional prayer might however be offered.

guiness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.

stance of *unrighteousness* is indeed *sin*, and every breach of his law must be displeasing to God, and be esteemed matter of just censure and lamentation; *but there is a sin not unto death* in the sense just assigned. There are indeed many, from which it evidently appears, that persons may be recovered; and in all such cases, Christian charity will require you to pray for your brethren. And from this dreadful evil

15 We know that who-ever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Divine grace will preserve every good man; for *we know that whosoever is born of God, does not sin*, in this terrible and ruinous manner; *but he who is born of God diligently keepeth himself from it, and Satan, the wicked one, who is the great abettor of all evil, doth not touch, or come near him*, but is immediately repelled in his first assaults. *We Christians do indeed know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*: it is in subjection to the wicked one, and lies wounded and slain under him. *But we know that, when the whole human race was in this helpless and miserable condition, the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in the Father and in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life;* he partakes with the Father in proper deity; and our immortal life is supported by union with him.

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true: even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children,

See to it, therefore, my dear *little children*, that you adhere to the worship of this true God

\* *The world lieth in wickedness*: ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ ὡκεῖται.] The whole world here, as the whole creation, Rom. viii. 22, signifies that part of the world in which Christianity was not received.—Some imagine, that by the world's lying in wickedness, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, the apostle refers to the abandoned wickedness of the Roman emperors, by whose means the most enormous iniquity and immorality was propagated through the whole empire, by prefects, officers, and soldiers. Goss. Truths vindic. p. 174 Mr. Reynolds, who supposes that hell is situated in the air, observes, that the earth, on that hypothesis lies, as it were, in the suburbs and frontiers of it. See his Enquiries concerning the Angelic world, p. 191. But I rather think the word *world* alludes to the

circumstance of a body which lies slain: in which sense it is often used by Homer; and on this interpretation it gives us a most compassionate idea of the great misery and helpless state of mankind, fallen by the stroke of this formidable enemy, the wicked one, (ὁ πονηρὸς,) and insulted over by him as his prey.

[*This is the true God.*] To paraphrase this of the true religion, as a very celebrated divine does, is quite enervating the force of scripture; and taking a liberty with plain words by no means to be allowed. It is an argument of the Deity of Christ, which almost all those who have wrote in its defence have urged; and which, I think, none who have opposed it, have so much as appeared to answer.

ACT. alone, and *keep yourselves from idols* : of every kind ; whom the jealous God will not suffer to share with him, either in the offices of religious worship, or in the supreme affection of the mind. *Amen*, may you be so kept and preserved to eternal life !

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us thankfully own the Divine goodness, in giving us so many helps for the confirmation of our faith ; and learn the importance of its being thus confirmed, from that variety of provision made for its establishment. The declared end of the apostle in writing this epistle was, that *they who believed in the name of the Son of God, might more firmly believe in it. Lord, increase our faith.* And with it our zeal for him, in whose name we believe, and our love to each other, for his sake : then shall we have *eternal life, the gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord* ; and in the mean time may address the throne with cheerfulness, and present our petitions in a pleading and confident hope, that asking what is agreeable to his will, (and all that he knows to be subservient to our truest interests is so,) he will hear us, and we shall receive the things that we ask. Encouraged by this promise, with what *boldness* may we come to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in every time of need ! (Heb. iv. 16.) Let his compassion to us teach us to have compassion on our brethren, on our afflicted brethren : yea, on those whose mis-carriages have evidently brought their afflictions upon them. Let us not too soon pronounce the case of a sinner hopeless ; but rather subject ourselves to the trouble of some fruitless attempts to reclaim him, than omit any thing where there may be a possibility of succeeding. May Divine grace awaken all to stand at the remotest distance, not only from the unpardonable sin, but from whatever might dishonour God, and endanger our own souls : for every sin is deadly and malignant, though every one be not the sin unto death. May we keep ourselves, and be kept by Divine grace, in such a manner, that the wicked one may not touch us ; but all his attempts be turned into his own shame and confusion !

[*Keep yourselves from idols.*] Archbishop Tillotson, (Vol. II. p. 488,) who interprets *the sin unto death*, as signifying total apostasy from the Christian religion, to the heathen idolatry, urges this clause, the connection of which with the context he thinks not else to be accounted for, as proof of it. But a man might commit the *sin unto death* by falling back into Ju-

daism, though guilty of no idolatry ; and the caution here suggested, may be very well accounted for, from the general circumstances of the church near that time, even though there should be no such immediate connection between this clause and the preceding context, as the Archbishop supposes.

And O, may God excite our pity to a world which lies in wickedness; and animate us to use our utmost endeavours, to *redeem those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him, at his pleasure.* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) May we be made sensible of the rich and distinguishing grace of God, if we can say that we are, not only by an external profession, but an inward union, *in Him that is true in the Lord Jesus Christ.* Him let us adore, *22* and with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the true God. Him let us seek, as *eternal life*; and let us keep ourselves from all those idols, which would alienate our regard from God, and by the pursuit of which our *eternal life* might in any degree be endangered.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST  
CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN



THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR:**

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE

OF

**ST. JOHN.**

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION





# A

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

### PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE SECOND AND THIRD

### EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

THESE epistles have been very improperly ranked under the denomination, *general* or *catholic*; since each is inscribed to a single person; one to a woman of distinction, styled here the *elect lady*; and the other to Gaius; probably the same person with Gaius of Corinth, who is styled by St. Paul his *host*, and is celebrated for his hospitality to the brethren; a character very agreeable to that which is here given of Gaius by the apostle John.

There is no fixing the date of these two epistles with any certainty. It in a great measure depends on the date of the *first* epistle; soon after which, it is generally agreed, both these were written. And this indeed appears exceeding probable, from that coincidence both of sentiment and expression, which occurs in all these epistles; and from hence it is inferred, that the state of things in the Christian church, referred to in these smaller epistles, was very much the same as it was at the time of writing the *first* epistle, and that the apostle having *lately* written it, had it now particularly in his view, and the sentiments and expressions of it

present to his mind. And possibly about the same time that he sent his *first* epistle to the Christian *general*, he might send his *second* to this honoured *individual*, and his *third* to his friend Gaius in particular, as a mark of peculiar regard. I shall not here enter into the debate concerning the *authenticity* of these two epistles, especially as I have already suggested on some former occasions, such general sentiments as are very applicable on this.

The brevity of these epistles renders it needless to give any other analysis of them than I have done in the contents prefixed to each respectively; to which I refer the reader.

A

## PARAPHRASE AND NOTES,

ON THE

### SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

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#### S E C T. I.

*The apostle John, addressing himself to a worthy Christian lady, expresses his joy in her good character, and that of her children; exhorts to continued love, and to guard against deceivers, whom it would be dangerous to countenance and encourage; referring what he had further to say till he should make her a visit.—2 John throughout.*

2 JOHN 1.

2 JOHN 1.

**T**H E elder unto **T**HIS letter is addressed by John, well known in these parts by the name of *the Elder*,<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *The Elder.*] The concealment of the name of the author can be no objection against ascribing it to St. John; since his name is also concealed in the *first epistle*, which is universally allowed to be his. Nor was it customary with this apostle, in any of his writings, to be free in mentioning his own name. His styling himself the *elder* in this and the following epistle, is probably the reason why they were ascribed by some of the ancients not to the apostle John, uni-

versally acknowledged to be the author of the *first epistle*, but to John, an *elder* or *presbyter* of Ephesus. He who would see the testimonies of the fathers, that the apostle John was the author of these two epistles, may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. There can hardly be stronger internal arguments, than the three epistles, now commonly ascribed to St. John, were the production of the same author, than may be derived from that very re-

SECT. 1. called under that character, to preside in the churches, to the elect lady,<sup>b</sup> whom I need not name, as her excellent Christian graces render her so gloriously distinguished; and to her children whom I love in the truth, on those principles which the gospel, the great system of truth, requires with respect to those who so remarkably support and adorn it. Nor indeed do I only love her and them, but they are beloved also by all those who know the truth, and who have had any opportunity of forming any intimate acquaintance with them. These amiable persons are justly dear to us all, because of the truth which dwelleth in us, and I doubt not, shall be in us for ever. And particularly so deeply is it grounded in your mind and heart, that I am persuaded the relish of it will never be lost, be the remaining years of life ever so many, or the events of them ever so trying.

2 May a rich assemblage of every desirable blessing, grace, mercy, [and] peace, be with you all from God the Father of all, and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father; and may it animate you to walk in truth, and in universal love, according to the tenor of that glorious gospel with which he hath favoured you.

3 I rejoiced greatly, when in some of those excursions which I made for the service of the gospel, I found some of thy children walking in a manner agreeable to the system of Divine truth, and according to the commandment which we have received from God the Father. And now I beseech thee, my dear and honoured lady, not as writing to thee a new and unknown commandment, but that which we had from the beginning of our acquaintance with our Divine Master, and the religion he came to introduce, that we may all love one another. And this is that love which alone can prove acceptable to him,

the elect lady. her children. I love in the truth; and not I or also all that have known the truth;

2 For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love,

markable similarity, of sentiment and phraseology which appears in them all, on the slightest attention.

<sup>b</sup> The elect lady.] Lord Barrington is of opinion the lady here spoken of is the church at Jerusalem, sister to that at Ephesus. Barr. Miscell. Sacr. p. 51, and the notion seems to have been taken from

Dr. Whitby. Compare Isaiah liv. 1; Gal. iv. 24, &c. But the arguments are by no means convincing: and ver. 10, seems a strong objection against it. It is probable that this lady, (styled here *ἐκλεκτὴ κυρία*, from whence some have fancied her proper name was *Electa*, and others, *Cyria*,) was a person of considerable distinction.

*and desires her to beware of seducers.*

6 ¶ we walk after  
the commandments.  
That is the command-  
ment that as ye have  
heard from the be-  
ginning, ye should  
walk in it.

that we should constantly walk according to his commandments, and this is the commandment, as ye have heard from the beginning that ye should walk in it; this was the great end of the gospel, to give us proper directions for our conduct, and motives to engage us to act accordingly. And these rules and principles have been so plainly and faithfully delivered to you, that I need not now say any thing more in relation to them.

7 For many de-  
ceivers are entered  
into the world, who  
confess not that Jesus  
Christ is come in the  
flesh. This is a de-  
ceiver and an anti-  
christ.

I refer you to those sacred lessons into which at your first conversion to Christianity you were initiated; because many deceivers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.<sup>c</sup> And this is a most certain mark of a deceiver and an antichrist; and if any would go about to refine upon the doctrine of the incarnation and passion of our blessed Redeemer, as if they were allegorical, and expressed mere appearances,\* and not realities, whatever sublime notions he may pretend, he is to be rejected with abhorrence. Let me therefore beseech you, and all my Christian friends, to whom this letter may come, that ye look to yourselves, and let us all attend to the caution, that we may not lose the things we have already wrought in the service of Christ, but persevering and abounding in it, may receive the ample reward which I trust through Divine

8 Look to your-  
selves, that we lose  
not those things  
which we have  
wrought, but that we  
receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever trans-  
gresseth, and abideth  
not in the doctrine of  
Christ, hath not God:  
he that abideth in  
the doctrine of Christ,  
he hath both the Fa-  
ther and the Son.

10 If there come  
any unto you, and  
bring not this doc-  
trine, receive him not  
into your house, nei-  
ther bid him God  
speed.

11 For he that

grace is laid up for us. For it is certain, that **every one who in this respect transgresseth and remaineth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not an interest in God; but he that remaineth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son,** whose cause and whose favour are inseparable. And if any one come unto you, under the character of a religious teacher, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, to give him countenance and support, neither wish him good success.<sup>d</sup> For he that

<sup>c</sup> Come in the flesh.] The apostle here alludes to the rise of those heretics who affirmed that Christ only came in appearance.

<sup>d</sup> Wish him good success.] Thus the Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby observe, were forbid to say *וַיִּשְׁכַּח*, or God-

speed, to an excommunicated person, or to come within four cubits of an heretic. But the apostle must not be here understood, as excluding the common offices of humanity to such persons; for that is contrary to all the general precepts of benevolence to be found in the gospel. But

sect. 1. thus supports and maintains him, and *wisheth him good success*, in a case like this, though he does not actually engage himself to labour in it, is partaker of his evil deeds, and in the sight of God and man, accessory to the damage, which such a seducer may, in consequence of such encouragement, bring upon the church.

biddeth him speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

John  
1. 11.

12 *Having many other things to write unto you, which might have employed my pen in a much longer epistle, I could not [do it] with paper and ink; but break off here, as I hope ere long to open my mind much more largely when I come to you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be fulfilled; and we may have mutual reason to acknowledge, that we have received much greater satisfaction than this imperfect method*

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 of converse can afford. In the mean time, I shall only add, that *the children of thine elect sister salute thee*, and I join with them in the kindest wishes which the sincerest friendship can form. And may God accomplish them. Amen.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1 LET us observe this delineation of a love truly Christian; the love, which the apostle, and all who knew the truth, are said to have had towards this *elect and excellent lady, for the truth's sake, which dwelt in her*. Adored be that grace, which preserved her in so high a rank of life, from temptations which could not fail to surround her! that grace, which rendered her an example of wisdom and piety, great and eminent in proportion to her exalted situation!

Nor can we forbear reflecting, how happy, in consequence of this, she herself was, possessed of *grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, in truth and love!* What were all the secular honours by which she was distinguished! What the possession of riches, which in their own nature, and unimproved to the pious and charitable purposes to which she improved them, are very empty and unsatisfactory; what are these, when compared with such important blessings! We cannot but rejoice, at this distance of time, and ignorant as we

to have received a seducing teacher into their houses, and have given him suitable accommodations, would have been shewing him such regard, and affording him such support, as indeed, in some measure would have made them answerable

for the mischief he might do in the church; such favours being not merely offices of common humanity, but of patronage and friendship: and, in the general, at least, a testimony of their approbation, as well as kindness.

*and on our obligation to avoid deceivers.*

the name, situation, and history, of this *worthy lady*, that *children walked in the truth*. It was a singular joy to JOHN, may be so in a degree to *all*; and may teach us to lift up our hearts to God in prayer, that all Christian parents, especially pious mothers, and more particularly those whose character in life is so eminently distinguished, may enjoy this happiness, and see the seed they are with such commendable industry sowing in the minds of their tender offspring, growing up, and bringing forth much fruit.

We have, in the beloved apostle, an excellent pattern of a *5, 6* becoming care, to make a correspondence with our Christian friends useful; which we shall do, if, like him, we are exhorting them to the cultivation of mutual love, and to a constant uniform care in *keeping the commandments of God*: if we continue warning them against the prevailing sins and errors of the day, and urging them to a holy solicitude, that they may *not lose what they have already attained*; but may receive full reward for *8* every work of faith, and labour of love, in consequence of a course of resolute and persevering piety.

Persons of the most distinguished goodness have need to be cautioned against that excess of generosity and hospitality, which might sometimes make them *partakers with seducers in their evil deeds*, by giving them their audience, and *wishing them good success*, while by their fair speeches they impose upon the simplicity of open and upright hearts, who, because themselves are void of fraud, are often void of suspicion too. But there is a prudent caution to be observed upon this head; and it is the part of faithful friendship to suggest it; for *many deceivers are come out into the world*. For our security against them, let us be always upon our guard, and take care to *continue in the doctrine of 7* Christ: that so we *may have the Father; and the Son*; and if we *9* are interested in *their* favour, we shall stand in need of nothing, and shall have nothing of which to be afraid. Amen.





THE  
FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,  
A PARAPHRASE

ON THE  
THIRD EPISTLE

OF  
ST. JOHN.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,  
AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



# PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

## THIRD EPISTLE OF St. JOHN.

### S E C T. I.

*The apostle John, in this short epistle to Gaius, expresses his concern for his prosperity, and his joy in the honourable character he maintained for Christian candour, hospitality, and zeal; cautions him against the ambitious and turbulent practices of Diotrephes; and recommending Demetrius to his friendship, refers what he had further to say, to a personal interview. 3 John, throughout.*

3 JOHN I.

**THE** Elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

3 JOHN I.

**THE** Elder addresses this epistle to the beloved and hospitable Gaius,<sup>a</sup> whom I love in the truth, and hold as dear in the bowels of Christ,

<sup>a</sup> Gaius.] We read of one Gaius, of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. who hospitably received the apostle Paul, when he went out to preach the gospel gratis; and if this were, he seems to have been, the same, he was St. Paul's convert: nor is it unreasonable calling him *his child* an argu-

ment to the contrary; since in the general he addresses *all* Christians in the same tender and affectionate style agreeably to the sweetness of his temper, and suitably to his advanced years. Compare Dr. Whitby in loc.

sect. from a regard to the advancement and honour  
1- of his gospel.

3 John  
2

*Beloved, I pray, that in every respect,<sup>b</sup> thou mayest prosper ; and particularly that thou mayest be in health ; as I have reason to believe that thy soul prospereth ; for I doubt not but that religion flourishes in thy heart, and abundantly justifies my wishing thee as healthful and prosperous as thou art good. For I rejoiced greatly*

*when the Christian brethren came from that part of the world in your neighbourhood, and testified concerning thy truth,<sup>c</sup> as thou walkest in the truth, and adornest the gospel by an exemplary behaviour. For indeed I have no greater*

*joy than this thing gives me, that I may hear<sup>d</sup> my Christian friends, whether converted by me, or others, whom I look upon as my dear children, are walking in the truth, and according to those directions which our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is the Way, the Truth, and*

*the Life, has given us. And, beloved, I must declare my entire approbation of thy conduct, and can openly bear my testimony to it, that thou dost faithfully, whatsoever thou performest towards the brethren, and towards strangers ; thy behaviour to thy fellow-Christians known to thee, and to those with whom thou hast little acquaintance, yea, to all who have occasion to cast themselves upon thy hospitality, is much to the credit of the gospel, and I doubt not but it proceeds from a principle of true faith, and over-*

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.

<sup>b</sup> *In every respect :  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma\ \pi\alpha\upsilon\lambda\omega\nu$ .] Our English translation is, *above all things*, Mr. Hallet would render it, *above all persons* ; as if he had said, you are the person, for whose temporal and spiritual advantage I am concerned more than any other. Hallet's Notes and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 61, 62. But the words may so justly bear the translation I have given them, by which all manner of difficulty is removed, that I think it much preferable to either of the former. And it hath the sanction of so good an authority as Erasmus Schmidius, who translates it *de omnibus*.*

<sup>c</sup> *Testified concerning thy truth :  $\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\eta\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ .] Some have supposed the apostle here means, that they bore witness to Gaius' sincerity, and that this is the idea*

we should affix to  $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  in this place, in order to avoid that tautology which there would be in the next clause, if we understood him here to speak of his *faith in the gospel*. But though it is allowed that  $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  may signify *sincerity*, yet if we suppose that to be the case here, it will be necessary to understand it in two different senses in the same sentence ; and I think the latter clause, *walking in the truth*, may have a further idea than merely his *faith*, which I have expressed in the paraphrase.

<sup>d</sup> *That I may hear.]* Dr. Whitby takes notice of it here, as an observation which many have made, that the use of the particle  $\iota\mu\epsilon$  for  $\sigma\upsilon$  and  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$  is a peculiarity in St. John's style.

6 Which have been the witness of thy charity before the church; whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotre-

flowing love to our common Redeemer. And indeed many of the Christian strangers, who have been thus generously entertained by thee, have testified very honourably concerning thy love before the church; whom thou dost well in bringing forward in their journey, in a manner worthy of God, proceeding from a principle of Divine love, and correspondent to the relation in which you and they stand to him.

And whatever thou dost for them, our great Lord will take as done to himself; for it was on his account, and out of zeal for his honour and interest, that they went out, abandoned their habitations, possessions, and callings, that they might spread his gospel; receiving nothing of the Gentiles, among whom they laboured; that they might take off all suspicion of those mercenary views, above which Divine grace had so far raised them. We ought therefore, all of us, who have any habitation of our own, hospitably and respectfully to receive such; that, if Divine Providence do not give us an opportunity of laying ourselves out, as they do, in the ministerial office, we may become, as it were, fellow-labourers with them in the service of the truth, and through Divine grace may be entitled to a part in their reward.

I have lately written to the church, about 9 which I know you are so much concerned; but I sometimes fear, lest it should not be with so good success as I could wish; for Diotrophes,

Bringing them forward in their journey.) This may possibly be understood in a spiritual sense, of assisting them in their travels through this wilderness to the heavenly world. Or it may have a literal signification, and then one kind of the hospitality and charity is put for the rest. But I rather prefer the former sense.

They went out, receiving nothing of the Gentiles. Εξήλθον μὴδὲν λαμβανόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνων.] Beza refers ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνων to ἔξηλθον, and understands it, that the persons here spoken of, went out from their respective countries and native places, (ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνων,) leaving all their worldly possessions, (μὴδὲν λαμβανόντες,) to go and preach the gospel. And in support of this construction, he observes, that παρὰ should have been used after λαμβανόντες, and not ἀπὸ. But Mat. xii. 25, 26, and 1 John ii. 27,

are evident confutations of this remark. And whereas he thinks it absurd to imagine, the unbelieving Gentiles would contribute to the support of the preachers of the gospel, it is an obvious reply, that τῶν ἔθνων may mean the believing Gentiles, as it is certain the word frequently does. Wolfius, who agrees with Beza, in referring ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνων to ἔξηλθον, understands it of their being driven and forced out by the Gentiles, having been stripped of their possessions; which would render them the more proper objects of kindness, and hospitality. But there is nothing of this in the idea suggested by the word ἔξηλθον, and the more common signification of it is to go out voluntarily. See Wolfii Curae Philolog. Vol. V. p. 334.

Diutrophes.] It is uncertain who he was. Grotius thinks he was a Gentile

sect. *who affects the pre-eminence among them, even above the apostles of Christ themselves, hath not received us with becoming regard; and his interest with some of the members is much greater*

John  
p.

10 *than it ought to be. Therefore if I come, as I hope I quickly shall, I will be mindful<sup>h</sup> of the works which he does; many of which are very irregular, while he is continually prating<sup>h</sup> against us with idle, petulant, and malicious words; and not content with this, goes yet farther in his opposition; for he receives not the brethren himself, though he knows they come from us, and hinders those who would receive them, from doing it; and casts them out of the church, forbidding them either to officiate, or communicate where his influence extends; than which nothing*

11 *can be more tyrannical or intolerable. As for thee, my beloved brother, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good: behold such a conduct as his with a just abhorrence; and act according to that model of humility and condescension which you have seen in others, who may justly claim an authority much superior to his. He that doeth good is of God: he knows him, and he imitates his most amiable and spotless pattern; but he that does evil, that harbours such malignant passions, and behaves in so injurious a manner, whatever high notions he may pretend to, has not seen God, but is plainly ignorant of his perfections and of his will.*

12 *Demetrius, on the contrary, is a most excellent person, who has a good testimony from all men, and even from the truth itself; and we have also, upon all occasions, borne, and do bear [the same] testimony; and ye know that this our testimony is true.*

13 *I have many other things which I should be glad to write to you; but I will not write them to you by ink and pen, as it would take up too much time, and I should not be able, after all,*

14 *fully to express myself. But I hope quickly to see thee, and to speak face to face, with all the*

phes, who loveth have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good, is of God: but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record, and ye know that our record is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.

convert, who would not admit the Jews; but it seems rather more probable that he was a Jew, who opposed the admission of the Gentiles, and set himself up as the

head of a party, in opposition to the apostles.

<sup>h</sup> Prating; φλυαζων.] Compare 1 Tim v. 13, note<sup>1</sup>.

15 Peace be to thee.  
Our friends salute  
thee. Greet the  
friends by name.

freedom we could desire; till that time there-  
fore, I refer what I might now further say; and  
only add, *Peace [be] to thee*, and every desirable  
blessing from God our Father, and Christ Jesus  
our Lord. *The Christian friends*, who are here,  
with me, *salute thee*; and I desire, that thou  
wouldst *salute the friends* that are with thee *by*  
*name*, and assure them of my most cordial and  
entire respect.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy was Gaius in the friendship of that apostle, whom  
Jesus had honoured with such a distinguished degree of his friend-  
ship! How much happier still was he, in a soul so thriving and  
prosperous, that even such a friend, who could not but hold flat-  
tery in detestation, should be able to make the good state of his  
soul, a standard by which to adjust his wishes in relation to his  
temporal affairs! O what a curse would this be upon many, that  
they might *prosper even as their souls prospered*! And yet what  
is *all other* prosperity without this, but like that of *fools, which*  
*destroys them*, (Prov. i. 32.) How agreeable is it to a true Chris-  
tian, to hear well of the behaviour of those who are dear to him  
in the bonds of peculiar friendship; to hear of their walking in  
the truth; and especially when these are our own children, or  
those whom God has made us the means of converting, or those  
whom we have been concerned in training up for him! O that  
those especially, to whom the education of many has been com-  
mitted, may have this great happiness! "Visit each of our chil-  
dren, and young friends, O Lord, with thy mercy; animate  
them to *walk in thy truth*; and entail thy blessing upon them,  
when nothing remains, of all the offices of love we have be-  
stowed, but the memory of our exhortations and examples!"

May sentiments of true generosity fill and expand our hearts  
more and more! May we act toward strangers, and especially  
our brethren, in all the instances in which they need our assis-  
tance, in a manner worthy of God, worthy of the relation in  
which we, and they, have the honour to stand to our heavenly  
Father; and especially, let our love abound to those who have a  
desire to spread the gospel. And O, that it were more univer-  
sal! O, that Divine grace would excite more to quit the indul-  
gence of their homes, or their countries, if there be no bond of  
duty to detain them there, that they may go and preach to the  
Gentiles! And though there be no prospect of any requital from  
them, God will open to them the inexhaustible stores of his ce-  
lestial treasure, *and they shall be recompensed in the resurrec-  
tion of the just*. Let them but see it, that their intentions are



SECT. pure, that they do it for his sake; and their labour shall not be in  
I. vain in the Lord.

- Verse But alas! how much more common even to this day, and that  
9 among the ministers of the gospel, is the character of *Diotrephes*,  
who loved to have the pre-eminence! How has the spirit of op-  
position and ambition prevailed in the church, as well as in the  
10 world! How does it still prevail! and in this view, how many  
malicious words have been uttered against those who have with  
the greatest simplicity desired to follow the apostles! With what  
contempt have they been cast out of the church! Yea, in a  
thousand instances, with what savage cruelty hunted out of the  
world! *How long, O Lord, holy and true!* Let us not, however  
11 be impatient, but glorify God, in the most humble or painful  
station he shall allot, by doing, or suffering all his will: still *imi-*  
*tating that which is good*, as becomes those *who are of God*, who  
hope to see him, and enjoy him for ever.  
12 Let us endeavour, like *Demetrius*, to secure to ourselves a  
*good report of all men*; but especially, let us see to it that we  
reverence our own consciences, and that we secure their testi-  
mony, which will be agreeable to that of the truth itself. So  
will our honour, and our happiness, be secured; and if any va-  
pour should now rise to obscure it, the day is near, when the  
Sun of righteousness shall undoubtedly chase it away.

THE  
FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

G. D.

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

ST. JUDE.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



A

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

### PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

### CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

**J**UDE, or Judas, the author of this epistle, is often mentioned as one of the *apostles* of our Lord, and the brother of James the less. The *canonical* authority of this epistle hath been disputed; but it is not the business of these commentaries to enter largely into such questions. Probably its authenticity would never have been doubted, had it not been for an imagination, ill-grounded indeed, that the author had quoted a *spurious* book, called the *prophecy of Enoch*. The reader may consult what learned men have written upon this argument, particularly, Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*; Dr. Whitby, and Dr. Twells, in the second part of his critical examination of the new text and version of the New Testament. The latter hath collected the principal materials with accuracy, and set them in a clear and convincing light.

There is a remarkable similarity between *this epistle* and part of the *second epistle of St. Peter*, which, (as we observed in the Introduction to that epistle,) was probably owing to this, that both the *apostles* drew their character of the false teachers, against whom they

cautioned their readers, from the character given of the false prophets in some ancient Jewish author; and it is very possible too, (as Bishop Sherlock observes,) that St. Jude might have the *second epistle of St. Peter* before him.

Dr. Mill fixes the date of this epistle about the year 90; (see his *Prolegomena*, p. 17, sect. 145, edit. Kuster;) and his principal argument is, that 'the false teachers, which St. Peter describes as *yet to come*, St. Jude mentions as *already come*. But on a comparison, there does not appear that remarkable difference in their phraseology, which will be sufficient to prove that St. Jude wrote his epistle *so long* after St. Peter's second epistle as is here supposed, though I acknowledge, it will prove that it was written *after* it.

The design of the apostle is plainly, "by describing  
 " the character of the false teachers, and pointing out  
 " the Divine judgments which persons of such a cha-  
 " racter had reason to expect, to caution Christians  
 " against listening to their suggestions, and being  
 " thereby perverted from the faith and purity of the  
 " gospel."

For the analysis of the epistle, I refer my reader to the contents prefixed to the two sections, into which I have divided it.

# PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

## ON THE

### CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST JUDE

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#### SECT. I.

*The apostle Jude, after a general salutation, exhorts the Christians to whom he wrote, strenuously to assert the purity of their common faith; reminding them of the destruction which came on God's professing people, yea, on the apostate angels, for their sins, as well as on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then he begins the description of some seditious and abandoned persons, from whom he imagined them in peculiar danger. Jude, ver. 1---11.*

#### JUDE 1.

**JUDE** 1.  
the servant  
of Jesus Christ,  
and brother of James,  
to them that are sanctified  
by God the  
Father, and preserved  
in Jesus Christ,  
and called:

**YOU** receive this epistle from *Jude*, who, like  
his brethren the other apostles, cannot but  
rejoice and glory in the title of a servant of  
*Jesus Christ*, and who is the brother of *James*,  
so well known by his distinguished services and  
sufferings in the cause of our Divine Master;  
and he inscribes it to those who are sanctified in  
*God the Father*, devoted to his service through  
the influence of his grace; who are also the called  
and preserved in *Jesus Christ*, brought into the

SECT.

I.

Jude 1.

ST. C. fellowship of his religion, and guarded by his  
 1. grace, in the midst of a thousand snares, which  
 Jude 2 might have tempted them to have made ship-  
 wreck of their faith. *May mercy, and peace,*

2 Mercy unto you  
 and peace, and love.  
 be multiplied.

3 bered among the most precious of them. *My  
 beloved, giving all diligence to write to you, con-  
 concerning the common salvation,<sup>a</sup> to the hope of  
 which we are brought by the profession of the  
 gospel, I judged it necessary to direct my pen,  
 particularly with respect to those unhappy at-  
 tempts that have been made, to adulterate Chris-  
 tianity, by some who continue to profess a re-  
 gard to it. I now therefore write to you, exhort-  
 ing and beseeching [you] to strive earnestly for  
 the faith, which was once for all delivered to the  
 saints, for the instruction of every future age ;  
 and not to suffer any by violence or by fraud to  
 4 rob you of so inestimable a treasure. For some  
 crafty and pernicious men have, as it were, with  
 a serpentine art, glided in among us, who were  
 of old, as it were, described and registered to this  
 condemnation,<sup>b</sup> by God's righteous sentence de-*

3 Beloved, when  
 I gave all diligence  
 to write unto you of  
 the common salva-  
 tion, it was needful  
 for me to write unto  
 you, and exhort you,  
 that ye should ear-  
 nestly contend for  
 the faith which was  
 once delivered unto  
 the saints.

4 For there are  
 certain men crept in  
 unawares, who were  
 before of old ordain-  
 ed to this condemna-

<sup>a</sup> *Giving all diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation. &c.*] Some have supposed the meaning is, That whereas he intended to write them a practical letter, he was compelled to go into some controversial subjects. I rather think he intends to declare by this expression, that the exhortation he now gives them, to contend earnestly for the faith, was indeed subservient to promote that common salvation he designed to lead them to the pursuit of. Bishop Sherlock thinks the faith delivered to the saints, is the same with the holy commandment delivered, 2 Pet. ii, 21, that is, with the directions and instructions which the council of the apostles had sent them, with regard to these pestilent teachers. Sherlock on Proph. p. 200 5th Edit.

<sup>b</sup> *Who were registered to this condemnation.*] The word *εγγεγραμμενοι* may well signify described and put upon record: that is, whose character and condemna- tion may be considered as described in

the punishment of other notorious sinners, who were a kind of representatives of them. Which interpretation I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it must bring upon his moral attributes, to suppose that he appoints men to sin against him, and then condemns them for doing what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to. A doctrine so pregnant with gloomy, and as I should fear, with fatal consequences, that I think it a part of the duty I owe to the word of God, to rescue it from the imputation of containing such a tenet. Bishop Sherlock thinks the word refers to the description given of such kind of persons, by an ancient writer of the Jewish nation, cited as he supposes in this epistle, and in the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter. Sherl. on Proph. p. 181 5th Edit. Compare ver. 13, 5, 7, 2

tion, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ

SECT.

1.

Jude 4

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom

nounced against crimes like theirs, long before they appeared in the world. *Impious and ungrateful men, who presume to turn even the grace of our God itself, which ought to be an everlasting source of love, and engagement to sanctity and obedience, into an occasion of lasciviousness; as if they thought they might with impunity go on to sin, that grace might abound; and denying God the only original Sovereign,<sup>c</sup> and our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has invested with universal dominion, to be acknowledged by all who would not be found rebels against himself! But I would remind you, as you once knew this, that having been taught it, you may never forget it, even that the Lord, having saved the people of Israel from out of the land of Egypt, and rescued them by so glorious an interposition of his almighty power, afterwards destroyed those that did not believe, though they had once experienced so wonderful a deliverance. And thus should we have reason to fear, that notwithstanding our Christian profession, he would destroy us, if we adulterate and pervert his religion, after a manner contrary to its original design. The angels also who kept not their first state,<sup>d</sup> but suffering their minds to be transported with ambitious and irregular passions, were discontented in that high rank of being which Providence assigned them, and left their proper abode in the region of glory, instead of permitting them to advance themselves by their rebellion, he has by his righteous vengeance precipitated into the pit of destruction, and reserved in perpetual bonds, under darkness, in the infernal prison, to be brought forth at the judgment of the great day, and then to receive their final sentence. And earth has produced 7*

<sup>c</sup> God the Sovereign, and our Lord, &c.] Some would render it, *our only Master, God and Lord.* See Dr. Watts on the Trin. p. 113. But it seems most agreeable to the general doctrine and phraseology of scripture, to retain our translation. Compare John xvii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Their first state; *την αγγελικην τακωσιν.*] Some translate these words, *the government of themselves.* But Dr. Scott interprets it of that place in heaven which was assigned them, and which they were not

content with; and their leaving; *this first habitation* he takes to have been a voluntary thing, and that they chose to come down to the neighbourhood of this earth, that they might seduce mankind to join with them in their revolt. But this does not seem to suit the phrase of their being cast out, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Mr. Boyse would translate it, *their own head,* that is, *Christ* Boyse's Serin. Vol. II. p. 406. Compare Hos. i. 11, in the Seventy



SECT. many awful scenes, in which the Divine vengeance has had its triumph over sinful mortals; <sup>1</sup> as particularly *Sodom and Gomorrah,*<sup>e</sup> and the cities about them, in like manner with them, committing fornication, and by yet grosser and more unnatural licentiousness, going after strange and detestable gratifications of their pampered and indulged flesh, are set forth for an example to other presumptuous sinners; suffering that, which really appears a most lively emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire,<sup>f</sup> having their lovely and fruitful country turned into a kind of hell upon earth. So these dreamers also,<sup>g</sup> in their luxurious indulgencies, suffer their thoughts to be amused with vain and polluted imaginations, whereby they defile the flesh, which ought to be sacred, together with the spirit, to the service of God. They make light of dominion and authority derived from the Supreme Sovereign, and speak evil of dignities, of persons in the most dishonourable stations: Whereas we have heard in tradition, that Michael the arch-angel, when contending in dispute with the devil, concerning the body of Moses,<sup>h</sup> which the angel was to bury

and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

<sup>8</sup> Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

<sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of

<sup>e</sup> *Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner with them.* τῶν περὶ τὰς πόλεων καὶ τῶν πόλεων. Some have pleaded, that this seems to imply, that the sin of the angels was fornication; and consequently, that this epistle is not authentic. But there seems no necessity for interpreting the expression with such extreme rigour, as if it must mean that their sin was of the same kind; it is sufficient that the comparison holds in this, that they were both guilty of very great wickedness — There are some who refer τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῶν πόλεων in like manner with them, to the cities about them, who sinned in the same manner with Sodom and Gomorrah; nor is it any objection to this, as some have supposed it is, that πόλεις cannot agree with πόλεων καὶ πόλεων; for in reality, these nouns are of the neuter gender, (see Luke xvii. 29; Mark vi. 11; Gen. xiii. 10,) in the Seventy. And if they were not, nothing is more common than an enallage of gender, in such a case as this, where πόλεις must refer to the men who inhabited these cities.

<sup>f</sup> *Vengeance of eternal fire.* Dr. Whitby as brought many arguments to prove,

that the vengeance here spoken of must be the loss of their cities, rather than their souls, and produces instances to show, that αἰώνιος is used in a sense consistent with this interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> *Dreamers:* ὀνειδιστὰς. Our translators render this, *filthy dreamers*. The context shews they deserve the epithet; but as the Greek does not express it, I judge it most faithful to the original to omit it.

<sup>h</sup> *Body of Moses.* Archbishop Tillotson, (see his Works, Vol. II. p. 158.) and many other good writers, think this illustrated by Deut. xxxiv. 6. He supposes, that had the devil been able to discover to the Jews the place where Moses was interred, they would afterwards have paid an idolatrous honour to his remains; and it would have gratified his malice exceedingly, to have made him an occasion of idolatry after his death, who had been so great an enemy to it in his life. To prevent this, he thinks that Michael buried the body secretly. This proves by the way, that good angels are sometimes concerned in limiting the power of devils, which must no doubt be a great vexation

Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee

privately, and he would have revealed, *did not presume to bring against him a railing accusation,*<sup>1</sup> but had so much reverence for the Divine presence, as to speak with moderation and gentleness, even to that great enemy of God and men; and said, *The Lord rebuke thee*<sup>k</sup> for this outrage, and teach thee to restrain such shocking expressions. (Compare Zech. iii. 2.) *But these* 10 *daring and impious men blaspheme what indeed they know not; and what they naturally, as the irrational animals, know,*<sup>l</sup> the things which tend to the gratification of their inferior part, the low circle to which their knowledge and care is confined, *in these they are corrupted*, by the gross and scandalous abuse of them, to the dishonour of God, and to their own infamy and destruction. *Wo be unto them, and wo will* 11 *attend them; for they have gone in the way of Cain*, that persecutor and murderer, while, like him, they have despised the appointed method of God's mercy; *and they have run on with prodigious eagerness in the description of Balaam's reward*; enslaved, like him, to mean secular views, they have abandoned themselves to sin and ruin, till at length they have perished<sup>m</sup> in

SECT.  
I.  
Jude 2.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Wo unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and pe-

to those malignant spirits. But Mr. Baxter suggests it as a doubt, whether it were about the *dead* body of Moses, or Moses exposed on the *water*, that there was this contention. Baxter's Works, Vol. II. p. 341.

<sup>1</sup> *A railing accusation.*] Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that the archangel was afraid the devil would have been too hard for him at railing. The words seem to me to intimate, that the angel thought it a part of the reverence due to God, not to mention his name and judgment, in a *serious* passionate manner, but mildly and gently. Witsius thinks the devil blasphemed, and that the angel did not accuse him, but referred the matter to the judgment of the great day. Witsii Miscell. Vol. II. IV. 6. § 28. See also the Commentary of this learned author in loc. whose remarks on all the verses are framed with great erudition and accuracy. Perhaps *ἐν ἑσθέρᾳ* *ἐν τρυφῇ* *ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ* may signify, that he did not pass judgment upon his blasphemy, but referred him to God.

<sup>k</sup> *The Lord rebuke thee.*] It is highly probable the apostle refers to some an-

cient book, in which this fact was thus mentioned, and speaks upon the supposition of its truth, which the persons he reasoned against, did not dispute. And the argument does not lie in any regard shewn to the devil as a dignitary, and one who exercises dominion over subordinate evil spirits; for to be a leader of a band of such inexcusable rebels could entitle him to no respect; but it seems to arise from the detestable character of the devil; as if he had said, If the angel did not rail even against the devil, how much less ought we against men in authority, even supposing them in some things to behave amiss? To do it therefore when they behave well, must be a wickedness yet much more aggravated.

<sup>l</sup> *Naturally know.*] Compare the notes on the parallel texts in 2 Pet. ii. for the illustration of this and other passages which occur here.

<sup>m</sup> *Have perished.*] This is a genuine trace of a prophetic spirit, which speaks of things certainly future, as if they were past. And as such I thought proper to illustrate it in the paraphrase.

## 348 *Reflections on the danger of Christians from seducers.*

SECT. *the contradiction of Korah*; like him they have <sup>rished in the gain-</sup>  
 1. <sup>saying of Core.</sup> opposed God's appointed messengers, and his  
 Son, to whom he has devolved the conduct of  
 Jude 11. his church; and methinks, like him and his  
 company, I see them already struck by the  
 lightning of God's wrath, and overwhelmed  
 with remediless destruction.

### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse How happy are the people of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in  
 1 him are *called, sanctified, and kept* by the Divine omnipotence,  
*through faith unto salvation!* For *mercy and peace shall be mul-*  
*tiplied* upon them, till mercy hath, as it were, finished his com-  
 mission and conducted them to eternal peace. We learn from  
 the example of the apostle before us, of how great necessity it is  
 in some circumstances, if ministers would promote the common  
 3 salvation of their hearers, to guard them against the prevailing  
 errors of the day, and to excite them earnestly to strive for the  
 faith once delivered to the saints, as for a prize of the highest  
 importance. May we rightly discern its nature, and be very  
 careful, that while we are attempting to exert a Christian zeal,  
 we do not mingle with it our own mistakes, and our own irregu-  
 lar passions, in such a manner as to tear in pieces what we are  
 so eager to preserve. In short, let us learn from scripture, what  
 that faith is, and what the importance of its respective articles  
 are; and let us always be endeavouring to maintain it in the  
 spirit of love.

May all who would disturb the church by pernicious doc-  
 4 trines, or scandalous practices; and especially, they who would  
 ungratefully *turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and there-  
 by *deny the only true God, and our Saviour*, reflect upon the  
 awful judgment of God on the rebel *angels*, and on the sinful  
 5, 7 men, not on the *cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* only, but even  
 5 on his own *people, whom he had delivered from Egypt*, when  
 they proved obstinate and *unbelieving*; and as we dread an ex-  
 clusion from the heavenly Canaan; yea, as we dread the chains  
 of darkness, and the vengeance of eternal fire; let us avoid and  
 3, &c. abhor the character described in the following verses: the dream  
 of lewdness, the brutal indulgence of sensuality, the contradic-  
 1 tion of Korah, the covetousness of Balaam, and the malignity  
 of Cain. God has written down their condemnation and de-  
 struction in the eternal records of his word; that they might be  
 4 for a sign, and that others may hear and fear, and take heed that  
 they do not so wickedly.

SECT. II.

*The apostle pursues the character of the scandalous professors he had mentioned before; and concludes with exhorting the Christians to whom he wrote, to endeavour to secure their own edification in faith and love, and to do their utmost for the preservation and recovery of others. Jude, ver. 12, to the end.*

JUDE 12.

THESE are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds: trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead,

JUDE 12.

I MUST further proceed to caution you, my brethren, against those wicked and seducing men, who are so desirous of insinuating themselves into the Christian church, and whose attempts to corrupt it are so unwearied, and, in many instances so fatal. *These are spots in your love-feasts,*<sup>a</sup> which tend to expose them to the reproach of the adversary; [*who*] *when they banquet with you, feed themselves without fear,* and will run into excesses, which if they be not resolutely suppressed, will be imputed to the whole body. They make indeed a great profession of their designs of usefulness in the church, but they are *clouds without water*, from which no refreshment or fruitfulness is to be expected: *borne about by the winds* of temptation, hither and thither, without any command of themselves; and if when they first took upon them the Christian profession, they gave some better hopes, as many of them perhaps did, they are like *trees, whose early buddings are withered,*<sup>b</sup> and so now remain *without fruit*; yea, not only so, but are *twice dead*:<sup>c</sup> successive summers and winters have passed over them, and they have been continually growing more fit for fuel,

SECT

11.

Jude 12

<sup>a</sup> *Love-feasts.*] So I chose to render *αἵμαται*, as it is well known the primitive Christians had such feasts, though it seems that from the *abuse* of them by persons of a character like those here described, they were soon laid aside. See Mr. Hallet on the subject. Notes and Disc. Vol. III. Disc. 6. Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby, who follows him, are not for referring the *αἵμαται* here mentioned to the Christians' feasts of charity; in opposition to whom, the learned reader may consult Witsius's Commentary on the place.

<sup>b</sup> *If hose early buddings are withered.*] We render this, *whose fruit withereth*; but it seems to me, that *ἀβυσσὶς* is much more exactly rendered, as in this version, and the appearance of a tautology avoided.

<sup>c</sup> *Twice dead.*] Some explain this of *natural corruption and apostasy*; but the gloss in the paraphrase seems much more easy and genuine. There is an admirable strength and spirit in the description given in the following verses.

- and so are now good for nothing but to be utterly rooted up, to be taken away from the plantation, which they only cumber, dishonour, and deform, and cast into the fire. Their passions are violent and impetuous, like so many *fierce waves of the sea*, furiously foaming out the irregular tumults of their hearts; and in them, *their own shame: wandering stars*,<sup>d</sup> which though for a while they may glitter, will soon have ended their course, will be found, notwithstanding all their blaze, destitute of any real and permanent light of their own, and in the number of those *to whom blackness of darkness is reserved for ever*, and will soon be driven to an eternal distance from the great Original of light and happiness, to which they shall never return.
- And indeed, when I consider their characters and their actions, I may say, that according to the ancient tradition, *Enoch, also the seventh in lineal descent from Adam prophesied against them*,<sup>e</sup> and described their crimes and their condemnation, *when he said, Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of his holy ones*, attended with legions of angels in his descent for this important purpose: For he comes to execute judgment upon all according to their respective works; and by witnesses that cannot be confronted, particularly *to convict all the ungodly*
- 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.
- 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,
- 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly a-

<sup>d</sup> *Wandering stars.*] The Jews are said to have called their teachers *stars*; and they are represented under that emblem, Rev. i. 16; ii. 1. And as the planets seem to have a very irregular motion, being sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, they are proper emblems of persons so unsettled in their principles, and so irregular in their behaviour, as these men were.

<sup>e</sup> *Enoch prophesied.*] A precious fragment of antediluvian history is here preserved to us, as it seems, by the special providence of God, who taught the apostle Jude to distinguish between what was genuine and spurious in the tradition. It can by no means be proved, that this is a quotation from that foolish book, called Enoch's prophecy; as Bishop Sherlock has very rightly urged; nor would it prove the inspiration of the book from whence it was taken, but only the truth of this particular passage. Sherlock on Proph.

p. 188, 189, 5th Edit. Compare 2 Tim. iii. 8, and the note there.

<sup>f</sup> *Prophesied against them.*] Mr. Blackwall (Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 164,) has shown by adequate authorities, that *ἐπιφύλαξις κρίσεως* may be rendered *prophesied against these*. Perhaps this may explain what was said before, of their being registered in this condemnation, ver. 4. Some have thought the coming of the Lord here mentioned, was his coming attended with angels to bring on the deluge. If it refers to his coming to the universal judgment, it is a most remarkable testimony to a future state, not indeed in the Mosaic economy, but previous to it. And perhaps Moses omitting this, (as I think it almost certain he knew it,) is to be resolved into the restriction under which he wrote, agreeable to the principles which the learned Dr. Warburton has so largely stated in his Divine Legation, &c.

among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate them-

among them, of all their impious works which they have impiously committed; and he will then be mindful, not only of their cruel and oppressive acts, but of all the hard and irreligious things which impious sinners have spoken against him and his people: and certain it is, that these words are as suitable to their case as if it had been particularly intended. *These are murmurers*, that

can never be contented with the allotments of Providence, or with the conduct of any about them; that find fault continually with their lot, walking according to their own unbridled lusts; and their mouth speaks extravagant things; some, by way of exclamation against those they disapprove, and others in the height of encomiums and panegyrics, on those who are their favourites, and the leaders of their party; having [such] persons in admiration, not so much for the sake of their real excellencies, as of some present gain which they meanly propose to themselves as the reward of their servile flattery.

But you, my beloved, instead of following these wandering guides, remember the words which were formerly spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>h</sup> who have preached his gospel to you in all its purity and energy. For they

have told you, that in the last time profane mockers shall come, walking according to their own ungodly and wanton lusts,<sup>i</sup> and making a jest of those who do not run with them to the same excesses of riot. These are they, who,

in many places, separate themselves from the church, as of a purer stamp, and more refined attainments than others; sensual, and entirely addicted to the low gratifications of their animal

<sup>g</sup> Extravagant things.] So I think τ'εργα may very probably be rendered; and if we may judge of extravagant things, by those which Irenæus in particular, has recorded in his account of some early heretics, the expression was applied with the utmost propriety. See the same phrase; Dan. xi. 36, in the seventy. Witsius in loc.

<sup>h</sup> Apostles of our Lord, &c.] The resemblance between this text and 2 Pet. iii. 2, is very remarkable. Bishop Sherlock observes it to be such as would incline one to think, that St. Jude had the

text in Peter before him, and omitted what hath a peculiar reference to the former part of St. Peter's epistle, and to which there was nothing in his own to answer. See his Discourses on Proph. p. 195. 5th Edit.

<sup>i</sup> Ungodly lusts.] For ἀνέγκυαν, ungodly, some would read ἀνέγκυαν, lascivious, or wanton. See Phil. Lips. against Collins, p. 73. But as this reading is not absolutely necessary to the sense, I cannot persuade myself to alter the word merely on conjecture.

# 352 They were therefore to keep themselves in the love of God: <sup>1</sup>

SECT. life; by which they make it too apparent, *that* selves, having not  
 11. *they have not the Spirit*, whatever high pretences the Spirit.  
 they may make to its extraordinary communi-  
 Jude 20 cations. But I have the pleasing persuasion,

that *you*, my beloved brethren, will not only guard against being seduced by them, but, according to the exhortations so often given you, will still be edifying yourselves and one another, in your most holy faith; that understanding its articles more clearly, and feeling their happy efficacy to promote the work of holiness in your souls, you may be more and more established against the attacks of these deceivers: especially, praying in the Holy Spirit, and under his influence, vouchsafed in answer to your prayers, 21 making swifter advances in the Divine life. And be careful thus to keep yourselves in the exercise of that sacred affection, the love of God, which ought always to rule in your hearts; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, to which this compassionate Saviour will assuredly conduct all those who confide in him.

22 And while you are yourselves animated with this cheerful hope, do your utmost for the preservation of others; and in this respect, on some have tender compassion, and apply to them with the softest and most endearing offices of Christian friendship; making a great difference between them, and the case of others, who have drank deeper of the poison, and are become active in 23 the mischief. It may seem to have an unkind appearance, but it is most certain, there are some, whom if you would save at all, you must attempt it with fear and trembling, by severe methods; as alarmed yourselves, and terrifying them with the apprehensions of God's judgments; as if you were snatching [them] with eagerness out of the fire, into which they are fallen, or just ready to fall. And if you desire, that your efforts, in either of these cases, should be successful, you must take great care to preserve your own purity, hating even the garment that is spotted with the flesh,<sup>k</sup> lest by the touch

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference;

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

<sup>k</sup> Garment spotted with the flesh.] Mr. Cradock interprets this of the caution, which had been worn by one who had a plague-sore; but perhaps there may be a reference to such passages in the Mosaic

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

of it you yourselves be polluted. I am sensible, this will require strenuous vigilance and resolution; but I hope the grace of God will animate you to it. To this therefore *now* I solemnly commit you; *even to him who is able to keep you from falling*: rugged and dangerous as the ways of life are, and feeble as you know yourselves to be, he is able at length to present [you] *blameless*, and in the full perfection of holiness, *before the presence of his glory*, in his final appearance, *with exceeding great and unutterable joy*. To him, as *the only wise God*, 25 who is now become *our Saviour*, our Guardian, our Friend, and our Father, [be] *glory and majesty, dominion and power*, ascribed; and obedience, reverence, and love rendered, through Christ Jesus, *both now and through all ages*, world without end. *Amen*.

SECT.  
II.  
Jude 1

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET those, who have the honour of being numbered among the disciples of Christ, stand at the remotest distance from the evil with which these unhappy creatures are branded by the apostle in this epistle. And may Divine grace preserve all his churches from such *spots in their feasts of charity*! May our horizon be secured from those dark and gloomy clouds without water; the plantations of God among us be free from the incumbrance and disgrace of those *withered and fruitless trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots*! How illustrious was the prophecy, with which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was inspired; and how precious is that fragment of antediluvian history, which is here preserved, and which shall surely be accomplished in its season! The day is now much nearer, when *the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints*: may the ungodly remember it, and suppress in time the speeches which will then assuredly be reprov'd, and repent of the deeds, which, if unrepented of, however forgotten now, will be brought into open view, and draw down upon their heads the destruction which at present seems to linger. That we may have confidence before him at his coming, let us remember the words of the apostle, and implore the influences of the Divine Spirit, which sensualists who walk after their own lusts, quench and stifle, and which they mock and deride. Let us, however, be concerned to edify ourselves in our most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy

law, as Lev. xv. 4, 10, 17. See Witsius on the place, who well defends this sense against Erasmus; whose opinion it was.

that the apostle alludes to the *white garment*, which those who were *newly baptised*, put on in token of *innocence*.



### 354 *Reflections on our obligations to faith, and the love of God!*

SECT. Ghost, under his influence, direction, and assistance. The security of the heart amidst so many temptations, and its richest cordial in all its afflictions, is the love of God: but how soon does the celestial flame languish and die, if it be not constantly fed with new fuel! Let it then be our care in humble dependence upon Divine grace, to *keep ourselves in the love of God*, which will be cherished in proportion to that degree of faith and hope, with which we *look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*: for what can so powerfully excite our love to God as such a consideration?

32 If we do expect it, let us express our regard to the salvation of others, as well as to our own; and apply ourselves to those who seem to be in danger, with such different addresses of awe or tenderness, as their different circumstances and tempers may require. But some way or another, let us exert ourselves to pluck them out of the fire, who are in danger of falling into it, and perishing for ever.

A care to preserve our own characters and consciences unspotted, will be necessary to our courage, and hope of success, in such efforts as these. Let us therefore be more frequently looking up to him, who *is able to keep us from falling*, and to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be *presented blameless before the presence of his glory*. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford; beyond what heaven itself shall have given us in the separate state; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed, in the seeing the full accomplishment of the travail of his soul. To him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, *be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.*

THE  
**FAMILY EXPOSITOR:**

OR,

**A PARAPHRASE**

ON THE

**REVELATION**

OF

**ST. JOHN.**

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

**VOL. VI.**



A  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES  
ON THE  
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THOUGH the authority of this book was called in question in the beginning of the *third century*, yet this is no reasonable objection against receiving it into the sacred canon; for perhaps no part of the New Testament, though of unquestionable authenticity and credit, was more universally acknowledged, or mentioned with higher respect, during the *two preceding centuries*. Dr. Mill observes, that in a few years after it was written, it was numbered among the *apostolical* writings, by the churches of Asia, the neighbouring churches of Syria and Samaria, the more distant ones of Africa, Egypt, and Rome, and the other churches of Europe. Accordingly Mr. Lowman, citing this remark of Dr. Mill, makes the following additional observation, "that hardly any one book hath received more early, more authentic, or more satisfactory attestations."

Its *canonical authority* being debated so late as the *third century*, when it had been universally admitted before, appears to have arisen, from the opposition made to those absurd opinions, which it is well known

were entertained by several fathers, concerning the *millennium*. These being entirely grounded upon an injudicious and mistaken interpretation of some prophecies, contained in this sacred book. Caius, with some others, to end the controversy as speedily and effectually as possible, weakly and indiscreetly ventured to deny the authority of the book, which had given occasion to it. If the reader would see this argument handled at large, and the sentiments of the ancients represented fully and distinctly, he may consult Dr. Mill's *Prolegomena*, Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations on the Apocalypse*, Dr. Twells's third part of his *Critical examination of the new text and version*, and Dr. Lardner's second part of the *Credibility of the Gospel-History*, *passim*.

This prophetic book is entitled, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he sent and signified by his angel to his servant John*. There is, in my opinion, very little reason to doubt, that the John here mentioned was the evangelist of that name, and the author of the three epistles. For concerning this John antiquity agrees, that he was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, for his adherence to the Christian faith. And the author of this book informs the churches of Asia, (chap. i. ver. 9,) that *he, their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, received these revelations, when he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ*. And if, with some learned men, we apprehend, that the tradition of the evangelist John being banished to the isle Patmos, was occasioned by this passage of the revelation, it shews at least, that it was the most early, as well as most generally received, opinion of the ancients, that the author of this book was the same with *St. John the Evangelist*. This book is commonly called, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. But this appellation of its author is not of *canonical authority*; it was first given to St. John by Eusebius, not to distinguish him from any other person of the same name, but on account of those mysterious and sublime points.

of divinity, with the knowledge of which he seems to have been favoured above his fellow-apostles.

If the account of Eusebius is to be credited, that St. John was banished into Patmos, and there received his revelation, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, we may fix the date of this book, with great probability, about the year 96. I am aware, that some authors of very distinguished character, and particularly the great Sir Isaac Newton, place it earlier, and even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The learned Wolfius, (in his *Prolegomena* to the Revelation, in the fifth volume of his *Curæ Philologicæ*;) hath examined and refuted this opinion; I shall here only observe, that perhaps the seven churches of Asia were not founded so early as this opinion supposes, or at least they were not then become so considerable, much less had undergone such changes and revolutions, as the respective epistles to them recorded in this book represent them to have done.

At the close of the magnificent description of our blessed Lord's appearance to St. John, contained in the first chapter, he is ordered to *write the things which he saw*, (that is, the glorious vision he then beheld,) and *the things which are*, or the state of the churches at that time, and *the things which shall be hereafter*, or the future state and condition of the church, to the end of the world: Accordingly, this book may properly be divided into *three parts*.

The *first*, containing the *introduction*, or a preface and dedication to the seven churches in Asia, and an account of the glorious vision of our Lord, with which St. John was favoured during his banishment in Patmos, where he also received a Divine revelation, concerning the state of the church. (Chap. i. throughout.)

The *second part*, containing the *epistles* which Christ commanded him to write to the seven churches of Asia, relating to their present circumstances, and to the duties resulting from them. (Chap. ii. and iii.)

The *third part*, which describes the condition of the church in after times, from the *third chapter* to the end

of the book, begins with a sublime description of the Deity enthroned in glory, surrounded with angels, and with the heavenly church; and then proceeds to represent a *sealed book*, or the volume of God's decrees, given to the *Lamb*, who only was worthy to open it, and who, on that account, receives the acclamation of the whole choir of saints, and angels. (chap. iv. v.) After this sublime apparatus, the *Lamb* is represented as opening the *seals* of the book, one after another; and with this the scene of prophecy begins; which may very properly be divided, (as it is by the learned Mr. Lowman, who is undoubtedly the best commentator extant, on this part of the New Testament,) into *seven periods*.

The **FIRST PERIOD** is that of the *seals*.

The *first seal* represents a white horse, his rider having a bow in his hand, and a crown of gold on his head, going forth to conquer.

The *second* represents a red horse; and to his rider is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth.

The *third* represents a black horse, whose rider hath a pair of scales in his hand, to weigh corn and provision.

The *fourth* represents a pale horse, whose name is Death, to whom is given power to slay the fourth part of the earth with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts of the field.

The *fifth* represents, under the altar, the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God; and the final reward of their constancy.

The *sixth* represents an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven.

After the description of the opening of these *six seals*, and of the consequent visions, an *angel* is represented as sealing *one hundred forty and four thousand* with the seal of God; after which is introduced the choir of the *heavenly church* blessing the Almighty; and one of the

*elders* shews St. John the happiness of those who had patiently endured tribulation: (Chap. vii. throughout.)

The *Lamb* is then represented as opening the *seventh seal*, which is succeeded by silence in heaven\* for the space of half an hour; introductory to the

SECOND PERIOD, which is that of the *trumpets*, given to the seven angels, already mentioned. And upon the sounding the

*First trumpet*, there is hail and fire mingled with blood, cast down upon the earth, representing bloody and destructive wars. On the sounding of the

*Second trumpet*, a great mountain, as it were, burning with fire, is cast into the sea; by which a third part of it becomes blood, and a third part of the creatures in the sea die, and a third part of the ships are destroyed. On the sounding of the

*Third trumpet*, a great burning star falls from heaven upon a third part of the rivers, and of the fountains of waters, and a third part of the waters become bitter. On the sounding of the

*Fourth trumpet*, a third part of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, is darkened. And a woe is denounced by one of the angels against them that dwell on the earth, for the trumpets of the three angels who are yet to sound. On the sounding of the

*Fifth trumpet*, the bottomless pit is opened, and from thence issue forth *locusts* in great multitudes, not to destroy the fruits of the earth, but to torment its inhabitants. These locusts are described like horses prepared for battle, with crowns on their heads like gold, and their faces like the faces of men, their hair like the hair of women, their teeth like lions, their breast-plates like iron, the noise of their wings like that of chariots and horses, their tails like scorpions, and armed with stings; having the angel of the bottomless pit for their leader. On the sounding of the

*Sixth trumpet*, the four angels which were bound by the great river Euphrates are loosed, and lead up mighty armies of horsemen for the destruction of mankind. (Chap. viii. & ix.)



After the sixth trumpet had sounded, St. John relates the marvellous vision of an angel who appeared to him in great glory, and brought him a little book, which he is commanded to eat; and then he is ordered, again, to prophesy to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (chap. x. throughout.) And thus the

THIRD PERIOD is introduced, which is pointed out by various representations ;

1. By the measuring of the Temple ; part of which is given to, and trodden under foot by the Gentiles ; and two witnesses are represented as prophesying in sackcloth 1260 days, and then, having been put to death, are raised again from the dead ; and upon the sounding of the trumpet of the *seventh* angel, their triumphs over their enemies are celebrated by the heavenly hosts ! (chap. xi. 1—18.) And the temple of God being opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant displayed, the state of the church in this period, is described,

2. As a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars ; and while she was in travail, assaulted by a fiery dragon, with seven heads, and ten horns, and on his heads seven crowns ; and when she is delivered, her child is caught up to God ; and she flies into the wilderness to avoid the dragon, where she is supported 1260 days ; and the dragon is vanquished by the angels : (chap. xi. 19—xii. throughout.) The deplorable condition of the church in this period is described further,

3. By the faithful being exposed to the ravages of a wild beast, whom St. John saw in a vision rising out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, that is, ten diadems, and on his heads names of blasphemy, to whom the dragon gave his power and authority ; so that the inhabitants of the earth worshipped the beast, as well as the dragon ; and the beast had power to make war with the saints 42 months, or 1260 days ; (which is the same space of time, during which the woman, in the preceding vision, is said to have been supported in the wilderness, and during which, in the first vision, the two witnesses are said to prophesy in sackcloth : a circum-

stance which plainly demonstrates these visions to be descriptive of the state of things in the same period, and not in successive periods.) And the power and authority of this beast is supported by another beast, which arose after it, and which is also particularly described. And the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, which is also said to be the number of a man, is *six hundred and sixty-six*—After which follows a sublime description of the *Lamb* standing on mount Zion, surrounded with the *one hundred and forty-four thousand*, who have the name of his Father written in their foreheads, while the heavenly church celebrates the happiness of those who had continued faithful, and persevered to the end.—The next vision is of an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel in his hand, denouncing the judgment of God to be approaching on the beast, and on them who worship him: which is likewise set forth by some succeeding representations:—And particularly,

By an order given to the *seven angels* to pour out their vials, full of the *seven last plagues*, in which the wrath of God is completed on the beast and his votaries.

The *first* vial is poured out upon the earth, and produces a grievous ulcer on them who had the mark of the beast.

The *second* vial is poured out upon the sea, which becomes blood, and every living thing in the sea dies.

The *third* vial is poured out on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, which also become blood.

The *fourth* vial is poured forth on the sun, which hath power given to it to scorch men with fire.

The *fifth* vial is poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom is darkened, and his votaries gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven for their pains and their ulcers.

The *sixth* vial is poured out on the river Euphrates, and the water of it is dried up, so that a way is prepared for the kings of the east; against whom the worshippers of the beast are drawn up in order of battle. And then upon the pouring out of

The *seventh* vial, a voice is heard from heaven accompanied with thunder and lightning, saying, "It is completed;" that is, Babylon the great hath drank of the cup of the wine of God's fiercest indignation.

After the pouring out of these *vials*, one of the angels, who had executed that commission, further explains what had been represented, by describing the character of the great *harlot* who sitteth on many waters, and with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. And then follows an account of another angel descending from heaven, declaring with a loud voice, that Babylon the great is fallen, and pointing out the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Upon which is described the triumph of the heavenly host on account of the fall of Babylon; which is further illustrated by the representation of an attack made by Christ and his army on the beast, ending in an entire victory over him. (chap. xiii.—xix.)

The **FOURTH PERIOD** represents an angel descending from heaven to confine the great *dragon*, or *Satan*, in the bottomless pit for the space of a *thousand years*; during which the church is in a very peaceful and flourishing condition. (chap. xx. 1—6.)

The **FIFTH PERIOD** represents *Satan* loosed again for a little season, and making a fresh attempt for the establishment of his kingdom, which shall issue in its utter destruction. (ver. 7—10.)

The **SIXTH PERIOD** represents the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the utter destruction of the wicked. (ver. 11, to the end.)

The **SEVENTH PERIOD** represents the vision of new heavens, and a new earth, or the happiness of the Jerusalem above, described by the sublimest figures which can enter into the human imagination. (chap. xxi. xxii.—5.)

In the conclusion of this truly marvellous series of prophecy, with which the canon of scripture closes, our blessed Lord, in the most awful manner, charges us

faithful servant and apostle John, to reveal to the churches what had thus been revealed to him, and declares his own speedy approach to the final judgment; denouncing a very dreadful sentence of condemnation on those who should *add to* or *diminish* the words of the prophecy of this book. And then the sacred writer concludes the whole with a solemn benediction; (chap. xxii. 6, to the end.)

After all the labour and pains, which learned men have been at, to explain and illustrate this book, so many articles are contained in it, which are dark and mysterious, that I remained some time undetermined, whether I should publish any commentary upon it at all. But on a more devout and attentive review, I resolved to offer to the reader what assistance I could, to enable him to comprehend its general design, and lead him to those practical and important instructions, which it suggests with great plainness and energy; without entering very deeply into critical inquiries concerning those particular events to which the several prophecies may be supposed to refer. It is an excellent observation of Monsieur Saurin, that "this is a very mortifying book to a mind greedy of knowledge and science, but a very satisfying and agreeable one to a heart solicitous about maxims and precepts," for regulating our tempers and lives; or, in his own expressive and elegant words, *L'Apocalypse, qui est un des plus mortificans Ouvrages, pour un Esprit avide de Connoissance et de Lumiere, est un des plus satisfaisans pour un Cœur avide de Maximes et de Precepts.* Saurin's *Serm.* Vol. XII. p. 234.



A  
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

REVELATION OF St. JOHN.

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S E C T. I.

*The preface, and dedication to the seven churches in Asia; including an affecting display of the Divine glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sublime songs of praise to him for redeeming love.* Rev. I. 1—8.

REVELATION I. 1.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ; which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

REVELATION I. 1.

THIS is the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ; even that revelation which God his Father gave to him for wise and holy purposes, to shew to his servants the things which must shortly be; many of which are to be very quickly accomplished, and the rest within a period of time, which, when compared with his reign in the heaven of heavens, with all his saints and people, is only a short and very inconsiderable duration. And sending the discovery of these things by his angel, whose office it was to raise extraordinary signs and representations in his imagination, he signified them to his servant

SECT. I.

Rev. I. 1.

SECT. John, who had indeed been distinguished by his

1. Master's affection in the days of his flesh ; inso-

Rev.

1. 1.

2 Jesus loved : And *who*, being honoured with

so important a message, failed not faithfully to declare it : but *testified the word of God*, which in those prophetic visions came unto him, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, (whose messenger the angel was,) exactly reporting *whatever he*

3 *saw*. Happy [is] he that attentively readeth, and they that obediently hear the words of this prophecy, and who keep the things that are written in it, fixing their mind upon them, and duly regarding them ; for the time of their accomplishment [is] at hand.

4 And considering the particular manner in which they were addressed by our blessed Lord, in some of the first of these revelations, JOHN dedicates and inscribes this account of the whole, to the seven churches, which are in the proconsular Asia, at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea ; wishing that *grace*, in the richest abundance, and *peace*, in all the variety of its blessings, may [be] with you all from the great God, the fountain of all blessings, even from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come<sup>a</sup>, possessed of inviolable Divine attributes and perfections ; and from the seven spirits, which are before his throne<sup>b</sup>, and appear as emblems of the various operations and endowments of that one blessed

5 Spirit by whom they are actuated : And from Jesus Christ, the true and faithful Wit-

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia : Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come : and from the seven spirits which are before his throne :

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and

<sup>a</sup> From him who is, and who was, &c.] The learned Grotius is of opinion, that the nominative case not being varied into what the grammarians call a genitive, as the common rules of grammar require, is designed to represent the everlasting veracity and invariableness of God, and the unchangeable majesty of Christ in the testimony of his gospel, and the glory of his kingdom.

<sup>b</sup> The seven spirits before his throne.] Some have explained this of the seven angels, and urged it as an instance of invocation to them ; but we may rather suppose the Spirit of God to be symbolically

represented by the seven spirits before the throne ; as it is a view very agreeable to the genius of this emblematical book. This, as Bishop Burnet observes, in support of this opinion, (see Burnet on the Articles, p. 39,) is most consistent with the prohibition of prayer to the angels. And if we do not suppose this to be the case, it will be a great difficulty to account for the omission of the Spirit, whose dignity must, on almost every hypothesis, be allowed far superior to that of the highest created angels. See Mr. Lowman in loc

the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

ness, whose testimony is ever to be received with the most religious regard, as being *the First-born from the dead*, the first who rose to die no more, and who as the eldest Son of the family of God, is gone to take possession of the inheritance for himself, *and* in the name of his brethren; even from him, who is *the supreme Ruler of all the kings of the earth*, and who knows how to humble them in their proudest careers, and defeat their mightiest opposition to his kingdom, by deposing one, or exalting another, at his sovereign pleasure; and even removing them by a single act of his will, not only from the thrones they fill, but from the world they inhabit. This glorious Person let us all adore, conscious of our infinite obligations to him; and say, *to him who hath loved us* with the most unparalleled affection, *and* hath condescended so low, that he hath *washed us* from the otherwise indelible stains of *our sins in his own most precious blood*, having shed it to make satisfaction and atonement for them; *And* in consequence of this, *hath made us kings and priests to his God and Father*, that we should reign with him in eternal life, and enjoy the perpetual pleasure of worshipping before him in his heavenly temple, and in the mean time be trained up for it by offering spiritual sacrifices: *to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever*, throughout the endless ages of eternity: *amen*: so let it be, for the honour of our Lord, as well as the comfort of his people, to whom he is more dear, than it is possible any separate interests of their own can be: And so it shall be; *7* for *behold* and observe with suitable regard, *he is*, as it were, even now *coming in* that pomp and majesty in which he himself described his appearance, with *the clouds* of heaven, in power and great glory; the day is so near at hand, that it may be said to be already come; *and* however men may affect to overlook and neglect him, and his interest now, *every eye shall then see him*,<sup>s</sup> and every other object which at

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall

He is coming in the clouds, and every eye shall see him.] It is surprising, that

Dr. Whitby should interpret these words as relating to the temporal calamities to



present invites their regard, shall utterly vanish; *see him, and they*  
 even all they who have pierced him shall behold *also which pierced*  
 him, and they that condemned him shall be ar- *him: and all kin-*  
 raigned at his tribunal; *dreds of the earth*  
*shall wail because of*  
 earth, who have rejected his government, and *him; even so, Amen.*  
 opposed his interest, shall mourn because of  
 him,<sup>a</sup> shall lament that fatal opposition, by  
 which, instead of prevailing in the least against  
 him, they have only effected their own destruc-  
 tion. "Fec, Lord, we repeat our joyful as-  
 sent: amen; come, Lord Jesus, in the clouds  
 "of heaven; take to thyself thy great power  
 "and reign; thy people shall lift up their heads  
 "with joy and triumph, being infallibly assured,  
 "that their complete redemption is approach-  
 "ing." And to confirm their faith and hope,  
 8 let them hear him speaking, as it were, by his  
 own majestic voice from heaven, and saying, *I am*  
*the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the*  
*end; I was before all worlds, and shall continue*  
*the same, when all the revolutions of this world*  
*are over, and the final scenes relating to it shall*  
*be concluded. I am the First and the Last; I am*  
*he, saith the Lord Jehovah, who is, and who was,*  
*and who is to come, the eternal, the unchange-*  
*able, the Almighty<sup>c</sup> Author, Supporter, and*  
*Disposer of all things.*

befall the Jews, when the destruction of  
 Jerusalem was long since past. And  
 whatever slaughter was made of the Jews  
 in Lybia, Smyrna, Alexandria, and  
 other places afterwards, it could by no  
 means be called, the coming of Christ in  
 the clouds by way of eminence: even  
 though that phrase might be allowed ap-  
 plicable to remarkable temporal ven-  
 geance, inflicted by the providence, and  
 in the cause of Christ.

<sup>a</sup> *All the tribes of the earth shall mourn*  
*because of him.]* In this verse is prefixed  
 the great moral, which the whole book is  
 designed to illustrate; namely, that  
 though there should be great opposition  
 made against the cause and kingdom of  
 Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain;  
 and his kingdom should triumph in the  
 most illustrious manner; so that all who  
 had opposed it, should have the greatest  
 reason to mourn. And as this series of  
 Divine prophecy begins, so it ends with  
 this sentiment, and with the joyful consent

of his faithful servants to this glorious  
 truth, which should fill the enemies of  
 Christ with such terror and dismay.  
 Compare chap. xxii. 20.

<sup>c</sup> *I am the Alpha, &c.]* This has been  
 interpreted by many as spoken by the  
 Father; but it will be very difficult to  
 give sufficient proof of it. Most of the  
 phrases, which are here used concerning  
 this glorious Person, are afterwards used  
 concerning our Lord Jesus Christ; and  
*unfrequently*, though in ecclesiastical writ-  
 ters of the earliest ages, generally, so far  
 as I can find appropriated to the Father,  
 may, according to the Syriac version, be  
 rendered, *He who holds*, that is, super-  
 intends, supports, and governs all; and  
 then it is applied to Christ, Col. i. 17:  
 Heb. i. 3. But if, after all, the words  
 should be understood as spoken by the  
 Father, our Lord's applying so many of  
 these titles afterwards to himself, plainly  
 proves his partaking with the Father in  
 the glory peculiar to the Divine nature.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what sublimity doth this wonderful book open! which though pregnant with inexplicable mysteries, is, at the same time, pregnant with instruction, which the weakest of Christ's humble disciples may peruse with sacred complacency and delight. For surely we are not to imagine that Divine book to be unfit for our perusal, and undeserving our regard, concerning which its Divine Author expressly declares, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy!* Thanks be to our<sup>3</sup> heavenly Father, that he gave it to his Son Jesus Christ. Thanks to the Son of God, that he gave it to his servant John, to be transmitted down to future generations.

Let us attentively view the Divine glory of the Father, and of his only begotten Son, who is the brightness of that glory, and the express image of his Person, and of the Holy Ghost, who is here represented by the seven spirits before the throne. From us, and<sup>4</sup> from all created nature, let there be glory to him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and to the first-born from the dead, who<sup>5</sup> is superior to all the kings of the earth, and to all the angels of heaven, who is so intimately united with the Father in Divine perfections and glories, that he also is the *Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End*: that he also is *almighty*; able by his mighty power to subdue all things to himself; and is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Never let us be unmindful of the condescension of the Son of God, in becoming for our redemption and salvation the Son of man. Let the great things he has done for us, the great things he has taught us to expect from him, be ever familiar to our minds. How astonishing was that love, which engaged him to wash us from our sins in his<sup>7</sup> own blood! How glorious is that exaltation to which he is raising us! rendering us, even in the present world, kings and priests to God, and inspiring us with the ardent hope of an immutable kingdom, and an everlasting priesthood in the temple of our God above. This is the sublime and transcendant happiness of all who with lively faith look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This illustrious Personage is coming in the clouds, and our eyes shall see him: too often already have we pierced him; let us now look up to him with an humble and lively faith; let us mourn over our sins at present, that we may not pour forth

and incommunicable to any creature.— See Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 175. Dr. Clarke contends that the word *exalted* is peculiar to the Father, (compare Clarke on the Trinity, Numb. 414,

and Posth. Serm. Vol. I. p. 70,) yet he intimates, that Christ may have the title of *Alpha and Omega, as Author and Finisher of our faith, Beginner and Completer of our salvation.* Heb. xii. 2.

## 372 St. John acquaints them that he was in the isle Patmos;

SECT. floods of unprofitable tears in that awful day; as all the tribes of the earth shall do, who have dared to set themselves against the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom which shall then be triumphant over all opposition, the last of its enemies being vanquished and destroyed.

### SECT. II.

St. John gives an account of the circumstances and manner of our Lord's appearance to him, when he received the revelation in Patmos. Rev. I. 9—16.

#### REVELATION I. 9.

SECT.

II.

Rev.

I. 9.

**I JOHN**, who was formerly distinguished by the name of the disciple whom Jesus loved,<sup>a</sup> *who am also your brother, O ye Christians, and who have the honour to be a partaker with you all in the tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: with all, I say, who are called to the hope of his kingdom, and in the patient expectation of that, endure with cheerfulness the afflictions which his infinite wisdom is pleased to appoint us: I was in the desert and disconsolate island of the Ægean sea called Patmos,<sup>b</sup> to which I was banished by Domitian the emperor, for the sake of the word of God, manifested in the gospel, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which I had endeavoured faithfully to maintain. I was on a sudden in the Spirit, under his miraculous energy, on that blessed day which we Christians are accustomed to call the Lord's day,<sup>c</sup> the first day of the week,*

Rev. I. 9.

**I JOHN**, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's

<sup>a</sup> *I John*, the disciple whom Jesus loved. [So I boldly paraphrase these words, trusting to the general tradition of the church upon this head, of which I have taken notice in the Introduction; and I think, there is some similarity in the phraseology here, and in the gospel of St. John, though I am sensible, at the same time, there is a greater elevation of style in some parts of this book than is to be found in the other writings of this apostle, which is not to be wondered at, considering the extraordinary nature of the scenes he records: which had a very natural tendency to raise the style, and perhaps might have elevated it in any future writings, in consequence of the wonderful

and sublime ideas which now passed through his mind.

<sup>b</sup> *Island called Patmos.*] Ecclesiastical history tells us, that St. John was here employed in digging a mine, being banished hither by Domitian the emperor, after he had come unhurt out of a cauldron of boiling oil. But the historical evidence produced for this great event, is very uncertain.

<sup>c</sup> *In the spirit on the Lord's day.*] It is so very unnatural, and contrary to the use of the word in all other authors, to interpret this of the Jewish sabbath, as Mr. Baxter justly argues at large, (see his works, Vol. III. p. 798,) that I cannot but conclude with him, and the genera-

## And Christ appeared to him in great glory.

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day; and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

which our dear Redeemer has rendered sacred and venerable, by his resurrection from the dead on the morning of it; and though I was then incapable of joining in any worshipping assembly, the want of that privilege was amply made up, by that manifestation with which the Lord of the day was pleased to favour me; for I heard a great voice behind me, as loud as the sound of a trumpet. Which said, in distinct and articulate accents, I, who am going to appear to thee,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

O John, am the Alpha and the Omega,<sup>d</sup> the First and the Last; I boast Divine perfections, and glories, and assume without robbery or usurpation, the peculiar titles and prerogatives of the one eternal, infinite, and unchangeable Jehovah; and am now descended from heaven, to give thee a revelation of the most astonishing and important events. And, as even the remotest ages are concerned in what thou seest, write an exact account of it in a book, and send copies of [it] to the seven churches in Asia,<sup>e</sup> to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea, that each may receive its own lesson, and at the same time enjoy the benefit of those which are intended for all the rest. And I turned to see the Person who uttered that wonderful voice which spake unto me; and being thus turned, I saw an astonishing scene, the particulars of which I shall now relate: There were

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw

12 turned to see the Person who uttered that wonderful voice which spake unto me; and being thus turned, I saw an astonishing scene, the particulars of which I shall now relate: There were

lity of Christian writers on this subject, that this text strongly infers the extraordinary regard paid to the first day of the week in the apostle's time, as a day solemnly consecrated to Christ, in memory of his resurrection from the dead.

<sup>d</sup> [I am Alpha and Omega.] That these titles should be repeated so soon, in a connection which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the eighth verse. The argument drawn in the preceding note upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had been found; but its immediate connection with this, greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in the Bible, toward preventing me from giving into that scheme which would make our Lord

Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature.

<sup>e</sup> [Seven churches in Asia.] I presume not to inquire, Whether these were the only Asiatic churches. To be sure, they were the principal. Nor will I inquire, why the epistles were appropriated to the churches of that province. It is certain they contain many things of universal concern; and as there is plainly an intention to represent the regard of Christ to ministers, and churches, by his walking among golden candlesticks, and holding stars in his right-hand, the number seven may be mentioned, as it seems best to harmonize with some other parts of this book, namely, with the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders, and seven spirits before the throne.

11. *seven golden lamps* on their stands, which gave a bright and beautiful flame; *And in the midst of the seven golden lamps*, there was [one] in a human form, a glorious and majestic Person, like him who appeared to Daniel under the title of the Son of man, and in whom I traced the lineaments of that blessed Redeemer, whom I had so long known under that eudæmic name and character; he appeared *clothed in a long robe*, not unlike the priestly vestment, and like persons of that holy order, girded, not about the middle, but something higher, *about the breasts with a golden girdle*,<sup>1</sup> which being properly
- 14 fastened there, hung down to his feet. And his head, even [his] hairs which adorned, it, and flowed round his shoulders, [were] *white as wool*, or to speak more properly, *as white as snow*; (Dan. vii. 9.) and his eyes [were] vivid
- 15 and piercing *as a flame of fire*; And his feet were resplendent *like fine brass*, when purified in a furnace from all its dross, and polished by the hands of some skilful artificer; and his voice was loud *as the voice of many waters*, so that I imagined it might have been heard as far as the sounding noise of the billows of the sea, when
- 16 they beat against the rocky shores; And he had in his right hand, *seven luminous and very beautiful stars*, the motions of which he seemed to direct and govern, at the same time that he supported them; and out of his mouth there went a sharp two-edged sword, or dagger, capable of piercing and wounding every way; and his countenance [was] radiant and glorious *as the sun [when he] shineth in all his meridian power and lustre*, and beams forth his rays, vigorous and unclouded.

seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.

<sup>1</sup> A golden girdle.] The girdles were a kind of sash, which first went over the neck like a tippet, were crossed on the breast, and then went round the lower part of the breast, two or three times, like a modern circingle, and then they fell down almost to the feet. And as they were sometimes embroidered, and sometimes fringed with gold, they must

make a very ornamental part of dress. The priests were required, for coolness and decency, to wear linen garments, and gird themselves higher than others. Compare Ezek. xlv. 17, 18. And this is one of the many allusions to the temple, and its forms and customs, with which we shall find this book so greatly to abound. Compare Exod. xxix. 5.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT unspeakable happiness can our blessed Redeemer confer on his faithful servants, while suffering in his cause! How wretched was Cæsar on his imperial throne, compared with this despised and persecuted disciple of Christ, in his old age banished to the desolate island of Patmos! There his Lord condescended to visit him, opened his eyes to prophetic visions, and diffused around him celestial glories. May we in no case be ashamed of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, a zeal for which was so graciously acknowledged, so gloriously rewarded.

It was on the Lord's day that the apostle was in the Spirit: how often has the Spirit of God visited his people at that sacred season, visited them as well in their secret retirements as in the public assembly; when the hand of Providence, as in the instance before us, and not their own negligence and indifference to Divine ordinances, occasioned their absence from them: otherwise we might fear that those raptures of mind, which in the contempt of ordinances some make their boast and glory, arise from the artifices of the great enemy of souls, and are to be numbered among the most dangerous engines by which he attempts our ruin.

Let our souls again bend, in humble veneration, to him who is *the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega*. As if we heard his awful voice proclaiming himself by these illustrious and Divine titles, let us turn, as it were, to behold him; and by these marvellous visions in which he manifested himself to St. John, let us endeavour to form some imperfect ideas of our blessed Lord, and the magnificence and glory with which he appears to the inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Every circumstance, not excepting the minutest and most inconsiderable, attending this appearance of Christ to his beloved apostle, seems designed to convey some Divine truth, some important lesson, for the contemplation and instruction of future ages. It was, in general, beyond all question, intended to impress us with the lowliest reverence of our glorified Redeemer, that we may pay him our humble and devout adoration, and thus in some degree anticipate the pleasure with which we hope to appear in his immediate presence above.

SECT. III.

Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses himself to the apostle John, and charges him with an epistle to each of the seven Asiatic churches already mentioned; and, in the first place, with the epistle to the church of Ephesus. Rev. I. 17—II. 7.

REVELATION I. 17.

Rev. I. 17.

I HAVE just been describing the appearance of Jesus Christ to me, with which I was favoured on the Lord's day, in the island of Patmos, while I was engaged in such devout sentiments as were suitable to the time and occasion; and I now add, that when I saw him in this awful, this glorious and resplendent form, I was perfectly overwhelmed with the majesty of his appearance, so that I fell down at his feet as dead; and he immediately condescended to raise me up with great indulgence; for he laid his right-hand upon me, [and] said to me, Fear not, John, for I appear to thee for purposes of mercy; I am, indeed, as I have proclaimed myself, the First and the Last, possessed of Divine perfection and glories; And yet I still wear the human form, which I assumed for the redemption of human and fallen creatures like thyself; I [am] he who lives, and have life immortal, and glory immutable in myself, though I was once dead, as thou knowest; and now behold it both with joy and wonder, I am living for ever and ever; (Amen;<sup>a</sup> be it so then, O Lord; mayest thou for ever live and reign!) And he added, I have the keys of the unseen world,<sup>b</sup> and of death; I

REV. I. 17.

AND when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right-hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not: I am the First and the Last.

<sup>18</sup> I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

<sup>a</sup> Amen.] As this word appears to have additional force, if understood as expressing the joyful assent of John to what was delivered, I have inclosed it and the paraphrase upon it in a parenthesis.

<sup>b</sup> Unseen world.] It must be allowed, that *adēs* sometimes signifies the grave, when the body only is spoken of. But, as Mr. Howe has largely proved in his excellent discourse on this text, the interpretation I have here given, is most reasonable. That which would refer it to hell as the seat of the damned, limits the sense in a manner very derogatory from

the honour of our blessed Redeemer, as he there shews unanswerably. Howe's Works, Vol. II. p. 61, &c. According to Grotius (see his note on Mat. xvi. 18,) the word, *hades*, always denotes either death, or the state after death, and they who are of opinion, that Luke xvi. 23, is an exception, may consult this learned author's judicious notes on this place. Our English, or rather Saxon word, *hell*, in its original signification, (though it is now understood in a more limited sense,) exactly answers to the Greek word, *hades*, and denotes a concealed, or unseen place;

but to write what he saw, what is, and what shall be.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter :

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right-hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches ; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

CHAP. II. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks :

2 I know thy

have a supreme dominion over it, and remove the souls of men from world to world, calling them out of the body, and fixing them in the invisible state, according to my pleasure, till at length I shall exert my power of raising the dead.

Write therefore the things which thou now seest, and those which will be opened to thy view, in which there will be, in part, a reference to the things which already are, and a further reference to the things which shall hereafter be.

And, as a general key to what I am now going to dictate, observe, that as to the mystery of the seven stars, which thou here seest as in my right-hand, and of the seven lamps which are of gold ; the seven stars are an emblematical representation of the angels, or presiding ministers of the seven churches ; and the seven lamps which thou seest, are a representation of the seven churches themselves, to which I have directed thee to inscribe and transmit the important epistles I am now about to dictate, according to what I observe of their respective circumstances and necessities.

And in the first place, address to the angel, or presiding officer, of the church at Ephesus, and write thus, *These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand*, to signify that he is the great support of his ministering servants, and directs their several situations and motions in the churches ; and *who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps*, to intimate thereby his presence among Christian societies, and his particular inspection over them. My eyes 2

and this sense of the word is still retained in the eastern, and especially, in the western counties of England, to *help over* a thing, is to *cover* it. See Lord King's History of the Creed, chap. iv.

c Respective circumstances and necessities.] How exactly the address in each epistle, suits the state of the church to which it was sent, and what condescension is implied in our Saviour's giving them these distinct notices and admonitions, is in some measure, though very imperfectly, illustrated in my Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ. See Sermon. vii. page 182—184.

d To the angel, or presiding officer.]

That there was one pastor, who presided in each of these churches, is indeed evident from the expression here used : but that he was a diocesan bishop, or had several congregations of Christians under his care, can by no means be proved. Nor is there the least hint of it, that I know of, in any of these epistles. Many have shewn from ancient Jewish writings, that there was an *officer of the synagogue* who had the name of *angel*. See Vitring. de Synag. Vet. lib. 3. p. ii. c. 3. And Dr. Lightfoot adds, that from his office of overlooking the reader of the law, he was called *ἄγγελος*, or *episcopos*. Compare Mal. ii. 7.



- SECT. have been carefully fixed upon thee, and I have  
 III. observed many things in thy conduct with pleasure. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy*  
 Rev. *patience*, with which thou hast endured the trials  
 II. 2. and sufferings to which thou hast been called out; and I know thou hast such a zeal for the honour of my gospel, and the establishment of my kingdom, *that thou canst not bear those who are evil.\** And as false pretensions to a Divine mission and inspiration are so common, I know thou hast tried those, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them [to be] liars, and rejected their pretensions with a becoming disdain. And I know thou hast sustained, with exemplary fortitude, the trouble they have given thee; and hast exercised invincible patience under all thy sufferings and trials, in my cause; and thou hast laboured constantly and tenaciously for my name's sake, and to establish the faith of my people; and hast not fainted under thy toils or tribulations. Nevertheless, I have [something] to allege against thee, exemplary as thou art, in many respects, and it is this, *That thou hast lost the zeal and fervour of thy first love†* to me and my cause; and this cannot but be very displeasing to me. Remember therefore from what thou art fallen; recal
- works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:
- 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.
- 4 Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.
- 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and

\* *Canst not bear those who are evil.* This has been pleaded by Lord Barrington, as an argument that the church of Ephesus, in the early days of Christianity, recovered itself from those corruptions, which some endeavoured to bring into it, (2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 17—26; iii. 6—10;) and which St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, endeavoured, it seems, with some happy success, to prevent. Misc. Sac. Vol. i. p. 42. Limborch has sufficiently shewn (see his Theol. lib. v. cap. 37, § 19,) the absurdity of opposing such a text as this to the great Christian doctrine of toleration, which some have madly endeavoured to prejudice by trifling inferences from such detached and perverted clauses, in opposition to the tenor of the whole New Testament. But the pretending to enforce such ecclesiastical censures as the laws of Christ do indeed in some cases require, with those secular terrors which the magistrate, by virtue of his office, is to inflict on immoralities

prejudicial to society, has been the destruction of Christian discipline, in popish countries universally, and generally in all protestant establishments too.

† *Last thy first love.* It is very plain, that these epistles, though inscribed to the angels or pastors of the churches, are directed to the churches themselves, as represented by them. Just as the Jewish church was represented by Joshua, their high priest, Zech. iii. 1. But it is not improbable, that where some of the churches are blamed, there might be in their ministers some faults correspondent to those charged upon the society; and particularly, that the zeal of this minister of Ephesus might be declining. There is, I think, no reason to be anxious with regard to Timothy's character on this account; for it can never be proved that he was a stated pastor of the church of Ephesus, though such confident things have been said concerning it on very slender foundations.

repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

[Take away thy lamp out of its place.] As this threatening is addressed to the church of Ephesus, though much better than some other churches, it is reasonable to believe, that it, like other denunciations, was intended to awaken the rest. It intimates how terrible a thing it would be to have the *gospel taken away* from them. And indeed it has been executed upon them all in a very awful manner. For though there be a little congregation, if I remember right, at Smyrna, yet most of these churches are quite ruined, and with them the cities in which they stood, though they were once very celebrated. And it is hardly possible, even for one who is not a Christian, to view the account which Sir Paul Ricaut, and the

those better days to thy memory, and in the view of them set thyself seriously to *repent of the decay* which hath so much prevailed; and *do the first works*, or rather endeavour to exceed them. Otherwise thou must expect, that *I will come unto thee quickly*, in some awful dispensations of providence, and take away thy lamp out of its place, unless thou repent; no longer shalt thou continue to be a church, if thou dost not endeavour to recover thy lost ground, and to shine at least with thy former lustre. Nevertheless, thou hast this honour and praise remaining, that thou hatest the impure works of the lewd Nicolaitans, which I also hate, as having brought so great a reproach upon the Christian name: To conclude: Let him that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit saith to all the churches for their encouragement; and to that of Ephesus in particular: To him who conquers the enemies, which lie in the way of his duty and happiness, and manfully breaks through all oppositions, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; the fruit of which gives immortality; and it is situated in the paradise above; so that he who resides within its reach, is possessed of such felicities and delights, as are far superior to those which Adam enjoyed in an earthly paradise, though in a state of uncorrupted and perfect innocence.

learned and ingenious Mr. Smith, have given of them, without being tenderly affected with so lamentable a catastrophe.

[Nicolaitans.] Some have thought these heretics derived their name from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons; and some ancient writers have asserted it. But the name was so common among the Jews, that little argument can be drawn from thence. See Eus. Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. c. 26. The substance of what ancient writers say concerning them is, that they taught the lawfulness of lewdness and idolatrous sacrifices, esteeming them things indifferent in their own nature; and their practices were suitable to such principles. Compare ver. 14, 15.

## IMPROVEMENT.

RECT.

III.

Chap. i.

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WITH whatever humble and holy reverence this awful representation of our blessed Redeemer may strike us, let us be encouraged to look up to him by a lively faith, and to hear with joy, and with purposes of the most grateful obedience, the gracious declaration he makes of that amazing contrast of Divine perfections and characters, and of human weaknesses and infirmities, which met in him. *The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*, is he who *lives and yet was dead*, but is now *alive for evermore*: for us he became liable to death, but is now risen to a Divine and immortal life; in which consideration, let us continually rejoice on his account and on our own. It is exceedingly reviving to the heart of a sincere Christian, that *Jesus* has the *keys of the unseen world, and of death*: so that whenever we are removed by the stroke of this our last enemy, it is only to be considered as his turning the key, which will let us out of this world into another, of happiness and glory everlasting. How delightful to reflect, that heaven is under the command of our Redeemer, and hell is under his controul! What have his faithful servants to fear from the one? what have they not to hope from the other? How does this cheering sentiment disarm both life and death, of their respective terrors!

Let us attend to each of these excellent epistles, which Christ condescended himself to dictate, and to address by the hand of his servant John, to these Asiatic churches. Let us attend to his titles, his admonitions, his promises, that we may be awed with holy reverence, that we may be animated to humble hope, and steady courage, in every encounter with the enemies of our salvation.

Chap.

ii. 1.

Let the ministers of Christ rejoice, that they are as stars in the right-hand of their redeemer. "Support them, O Lord, by thy almighty power, and guide all their motions by thine infinite wisdom." Let all the *churches of Christ* remember, that he *walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks*; may they be *pure gold*; may their lamps shine with unsullied lustre, that their Father may be glorified, and their Saviour delighted with the survey.

2, 3

He sees our labour, our patience, our fidelity, and our zeal. May he see that we cannot bear those who would corrupt our religion, without exerting ourselves to silence their false pretensions, and to guard the churches, to which we are related especially, from the venom they might diffuse over them! In all these respects, may we daily approve ourselves to him in a more perfect manner. But alas! does he not perceive in many of us, what he complained so early of, in the church of Ephesus:

## Christ's epistle to the church of Smyrna.

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that we have lost our first love, and that much of that zeal with which we set out in religion is declined? If so, let us take the alarm: for dreadful indeed would it be, to have our candlestick removed out of its place; to have the gospel and all its privileges taken away from us. To prevent this awful judgment, let us *recollect from whence we are fallen*, if we are indeed in a backsliding and declining state; and humbly and heartily repent, and vigorously exert ourselves against the enemies of our salvation: that overcoming the difficulties of this howling wilderness, we may be received to the enjoyments of the heavenly country: and when we can no longer share in the bounties of Providence in this inferior state, be feasted with the fruit of the tree of life, *which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

### S E C T. IV.

*The epistles which Christ orders St. John to write to the churches of Smyrna and Pergamos. Rev. II. 8—17.*

REV. II. 8.

REVELATION II. 8.

AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive;

AND to the angel, or minister, of the church of Smyrna, write, *These things saith the First and the Last*; that glorious and Divine Person, who having assumed the human nature into a union with Deity, is able to say, *he was dead and is alive*; who therefore demands by all considerations of reverence, gratitude, and love, thy most attentive audience, and most obedient regard; *I know thy works* to have been in

SECT.  
IV.  
Rev.  
II. 8

9 I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich;) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews,

many respects very extraordinary; and I am well acquainted with thy *tribulation and poverty*,<sup>a</sup> with the humble opinion thou hast of thyself; but I know also that *thou art rich* in faith and in all its genuine effects, and art daily laying up for thyself an increasing treasure in heaven. *And [I also know] the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not,*<sup>b</sup> but while they

<sup>a</sup> *And poverty.*] Archbishop Wake supposes this refers to the extraordinary character of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; who had, as ecclesiastical history tell us, reduced himself to a voluntary poverty, as many of the primitive bishops did, by selling his estate, and distributing it to the poor. But I much question, whether the personal character of the bishop, or pastor, of these churches, be referred

to in this address: and the very next verse seems to demonstrate it is not. Compare also ver. 5.

<sup>b</sup> *Say they are Jews, and are not.*] There were great numbers of Jews in the præconsular Asia; and their inveteracy against the gospel there, and elsewhere, is well known. This is an instance, in which the word *Jew* signifies one of God's peculiar people; and it is not improbable,

boast their relation to the synagogue of Moses, and are not, but  
 [are] indeed the synagogue of Satan, whose are the synagogue of Satan.

temper they breathe in their opposition to my  
 gospel, and to my people, while they blasphemously pretend a zeal for my name, even in their

10 impieties. But let all my faithful servants be encouraged boldly to face their opposition; and I say to each of them, in addressing to thee, *Fear none of the things which thou shalt suffer*; for, behold, I inform you, that the devil, acting as and by these instruments, the men of his synagogue, will indeed have a permission to cast some of you into prison,<sup>c</sup> that you may be tried, and by these trials more remarkably approved; and ye shall have tribulation ten days;<sup>d</sup> for a certain limited time, he shall be permitted to afflict you; but bear up courageously against his assaults, as becomes my valiant soldiers: *be thou faithful unto death*,<sup>e</sup> persevere in thy attachment to me, and thy zeal for my interest, even to the last, though death in its most terrible form should assault thee; for thou fightest under a General, who, though thou fall by the stroke of this last enemy, can raise thee again; and, instead of losing by thy fidelity to me, thou shalt be richly rewarded: for *I will give thee a crown of eternal life*, and advance thee to such glory and felicity, as shall be infinitely more than an equivalent for the utmost thou canst possibly suffer in

11 my cause. *He that hath an ear to hear, let him be all attention to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: The valiant conqueror shall be secured from evils, which are beyond all com-*

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh,

that many prophetic phrases, in which Jewish rites are mentioned, are to be interpreted with as great a latitude; that is, for those rites of worship which God's peculiar people should use.

<sup>c</sup> Cast some of you into prison.] Whether the power of the synagogue extended so far as to imprison, I do not certainly know; to scourging it undoubtedly extended.

<sup>d</sup> Tribulation ten days.] Mr. Fleming (of the resurrection, p. 129,) with many others, thinks this refers to the persecution under Domitian, which continued about ten years, and was begun when John was banished into Patmos, and saw

these revelations. But it may only signify a short and limited time. Compare Gen. xxxi. 7; 1 Sam. i. 8; Eccl. vii. 19; Dan. i. 12; Zech. viii. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Be thou faithful unto death, &c.] I have endeavoured at large to illustrate the great force of this noble text in my funeral sermon for that illustrious Christian hero, Colonel Gardiner, whose name I could not forbear recording here; and the memoirs of whose life, which from the most intimate knowledge of him I have written, will, I hope, promote the admiration, love, and imitation of all who peruse them.

## Christ's epistle to the church of Pergamos.

shall not be hurt of the second death.

parison greater than any he can endure on earth. In this world he may indeed encounter the first death for my sake; but he shall *not be injured hereafter by the second*; he shall rest in everlasting security and peace, while those who desert and renounce their duty for the preservation of this transitory life, shall be consigned to that state of misery, where they shall seek death, but it shall for ever flee from them.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

*And to the angel, or minister, of the church, which [is] in Pergamos, write, these things saith he, who in token of the penetrating and efficacious nature of his word, is represented as one who has the sharp two-edged sword coming out of his mouth; even that word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword: I know thy works, and thy circumstances, in every respect; and particularly, where thou dwellest; [even] where the throne of Satan [is] fixed, in the midst of superstition, and in the midst of persecution, by the union of which the kingdom of darkness is supported; and thou holdest fast the honour of my name, and hast not denied and renounced my faith, even in those days of extreme difficulty and danger in which Antipas [was] my faithful martyr; and sealed his fidelity to me with his blood; even that dear and resolute Christian, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth, and seems to take up his residence, as might be inferred from the enormities which are continually practising there. Nevertheless, I have a few things to al-*

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

[Antipas my faithful martyr.] Ecclesiastical history has not informed us who this Antipas was. Perhaps he was some zealous minister, who died for the faith he had preached; or some private Christian of obscure birth, rank, and circumstances *ennobled* by enduring martyrdom in the Christian cause. But we may be

sure that such condescending notice taken of him by his Divine Master, who mentions his name with affection and regard, would be, instead of a thousand arguments, to animate the courage and fidelity of other Christians, who might be called out to the like extremities.

SECT. 11. 15. *tion.* These practices are tolerated by some among you; whom therefore it becomes you to search out, and to treat with due severity; for *thou in like manner hast those that hold the doctrine of the accursed Balaamites, or wicked Nicolaitans,<sup>a</sup> which I hate.* Repent therefore of these irregularities; or otherwise thou mayest depend upon it, that *I will come unto thee quickly in a way of chastisement, and I will fight against them with the sharp sword [that cometh out] of my mouth; I will pronounce terrible calamities against you, and execute upon you what*

16 *I have threatened in my word. He that hath an ear at all, capable of hearing, let him hear with the greatest attention, what the Spirit saith to the churches: To the conqueror, I will give the privilege of being, as it were, admitted into the most holy place; and there he shall have liberty to eat of the hidden manna; and shall be entertained with those sacred pleasures, which God's sanctuary above affords, and of which the manna that fell in the wilderness, and was laid up in a golden vessel before the Lord, was only an imperfect type. And I will give him a white stone,<sup>b</sup> in token of full absolu-*

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone,

<sup>a</sup> Balaamites, or Nicolaitans.] As Balaam has the same signification in Hebrew which Nicolaus has in Greek, and both signify conquerors of the people, (which name might probably be given to the celebrated Balaam, on account of the great influence which he had in the place where he lived,) it seems not improbable, that the doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans, might be the same; (or the latter might be more strenuous in justifying and propagating their doctrine, and acting upon it.) As if he had said, Balaam taught Balak to lay a stumbling-block before the children of Israel; and thou hast also them that hold the doctrine of the Balaamites. Probably this doctrine might be like that of some modern seducers, that it was lawful to dissemble the Christian faith, and to conform to established superstition, to prevent persecution: a fatal error, which tends most effectually to overthrow Christianity; the existence of which, in these latter ages, is owing to the contrary doctrine and practice. And I greatly fear, that millions of souls are continually sacrificed to it, especially in France, and other countries, in which

protestant churches were once planted, but are now overthrown. Nor can it be hoped, that the reformed interest will ever revive, till a few of its professors at least have the courage to die for the truth, and scatter their blood as the seed of the church. An anonymous writer, (in the Memoirs of Liter. Vol. V. p. 258.) thinks that by Balaamites, or Nicolaitans, (which he also supposes the same,) we are, in general, to understand lewd and profligate persons, who aim at nothing but their own secular advantage, and pleads in favour of his opinion, ver. 20; iii. 9; viii. 11; ix. 11; xi. 8, in all which places proper names are used in such a figurative manner, to express characters resembling theirs whose names are thus used.

<sup>b</sup> A white stone.] It is well known, that among the Greeks, a white stone was a token of absolution, as a black stone was of condemnation; but the writing a new name upon this stone is not, that I know of, illustrated by any ancient practice. And the connection between the two ideas seems to be this, That in the great day, on which the absolution of Christ's people was to be declared publicly, they

## Reflections on the epistles to Smyrna and Pergamos.

and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, except he receiveth it; I will admit him to that intimacy of sacred friendship, from whence results a joy which the stranger intermeddles not with, and which can be only conceived by those who happily experience it.

### IMPROVEMENT.

AGAIN let us direct our eyes to that glorious Person, who is *the First and the Last*; and who, though it may appear incompatible with that Divine title, was once dead, and is *alive again*; and since he is here awfully represented as with a *sharp sword* going out of his mouth, let us be greatly concerned, that we do not incur his displeasure by our irregular conduct, lest he smite, or even destroy us. Let us observe and imitate what he commends in the churches whom he here addresses; their humility in being sensible of their poverty, when enriched by his grace; their patience, their diligence, and the resolution with which they retained the honour of his name, notwithstanding the throne of Satan was in the midst of them, and the rage of persecution had destroyed Antipas before their eyes; that blessed, that triumphant hero, whose fidelity and constancy his Divine Saviour commemorates with approbation, and even with satisfaction and pleasure. Who would not be ambitious of dying in the same manner, were it ever so severe and terrible, to be thus honoured and celebrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, or any of his faithful apostles? Let us not be terrified at the apprehension of what we may suffer from the malice of Satan, and by his instruments, 10

were to be admitted into that intimate converse, and high state of favour, which is signified by the *new name*; which last circumstance plainly alludes to the custom of princes, who give new names to those whom they have raised to very extraordinary dignity; of which we have many instances in the Old Testament; particularly, Gen. xli. 45; 2 Sam. xii. 25; Dan. i. 7. Dr Goodman thinks this is an allusion to the token, or ticket, given to the conqueror in the Olympic games, expressing his name, and signifying the reward he was to receive for his achievements. See his *Pur. of the Prod.* p. 307.

[No man knoweth, except he who receiveth it.] I have sometimes thought, ὁ λαμβανων, may signify, one that has received it, as it seems a name given to any

person, must be known to others, or it would be given in vain; and then it intimates, that honour shall be conferred on such an one, which shall only be known to the inhabitants of that world to which he shall be admitted, and who have already received it. Otherwise, it must refer to a custom which has sometimes prevailed among princes, of giving particular names, expressing familiarity and delight, to distinguished favourites, by which to call them in the greatest intimacy of converse, whether by discourse or by letter; and which have not been communicated to others, or used by them at other times. I have hinted at both in the paraphrase, not being able in my own mind certainly to determine, which is the peculiar and more exact sense.



SECT. even though not merely imprisonment, but death itself were to  
 IV. await us. It is only for a limited time that he can occasion tri-  
 ~~~~~ bulation to any of the people of God; and our blessed Lord will  
 never be unmindful of that gracious promise, *Be thou faithful  
 unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* O let us by  
 faith survey that innumerable company, who, though they have  
 Verse fallen by the stroke of the *first death*, have been, and shall for  
 11 ever be, *unhurt by the second*: that blessed society who are en-  
 circled with immortal crowns, which their triumphant Leader,  
 whom they followed with such undaunted fortitude, hath bestow-  
 ed upon them; who, though they partake no longer of the bread  
 that perisheth, nor are feasted with earthly viands, are yet eat-  
 17 ing of the hidden manna; who have received the white stone, in  
 token of their absolution; and while the names and memory of  
 many of them have sunk into oblivion, and the honours attend-  
 ing others are of little consequence, they are known in the hea-  
 venly regions by a new name, conferred as a mark of favour and  
 distinction by the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. We are  
 drawing on, if we are true Christians, to the completion of that  
 blessed hope, and that we may not be disappointed, may we, by  
 14, 15 Divine grace, be preserved from the artifices of those who call  
 19 themselves the people of God, while they are indeed of the  
 synagogue of Satan, and from whatever, like the doctrine of  
 Balaam, would ensnare our consciences, and defile our souls.

## S E C T. V.

*The epistles, which Christ charges St. John to write to the  
 churches of Thyatira and Sardis. Rev. II. 18. to the end.  
 Rev. III. 1—6.*

## REVELATION II. 18.

SECT.  
V.

~~~~~ AND to the angel, or Christian minister, of the  
 church in Thyatira, write these things saith  
 the Son of God, who hath his eyes bright, and  
 Rev. penetrating as a flame of fire, and his feet  
 II. 18. shining like fine brass: I know and approve  
 19 thy works of piety, which are many, and  
 which, I am well apprised are the effects of ar-  
 dent love to me; and I am acquainted with the  
 service thou art performing for my cause and in-  
 terest, and with thy faith and thy patience; and  
 that, with respect to thy works, the last [are]  
 more, greater, and better, than the first. Very  
 far art thou from that declining state of reli-  
 gion, of which I have had reason elsewhere to

REV. II. 18.

AND unto the  
 angel of the  
 church in Thyatira,  
 write, These things  
 saith the Son of God.  
 who hath his eyes  
 like unto a flame of  
 fire, and his feet are  
 like fine brass:  
 19 I know thy  
 works, and charity,  
 and service, and  
 faith, and thy pati-  
 ence, and thy works;  
 and the last to be  
 more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death: and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I

complain. Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee; and particularly, that thou permittest that woman Jezebel,<sup>a</sup> (for she deserves no better name, than of that infamous and idolatrous harlot,) who audaciously and falsely says, that she is a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants, in order to avoid persecution, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.<sup>b</sup>

And she is the more inexcusable as I have given 21 her sufficient time to repent of her fornication, and she repented not; but continued her enormities with increasing aggravation. But behold, 22 at length, I will execute judgment upon her.

And let the process of my righteous vengeance be observed: I am just preparing to cast her into a bed; and will bring those who commit fornication with her, who suffer their consciences to be debauched by such licentious and detestable principles, into great tribulation, unless they speedily repent of their wicked works. And I will slay her children, those that presume 23 to follow her in her wickedness, with sudden and inevitable death; and all the churches shall know, that though I am very long-suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities; yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with; that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and that I am he who searcheth the reins and the hearts;<sup>c</sup> and I will at length ap-

SECT.  
V.  
Rev.  
II. 20

<sup>a</sup> That woman Jezebel.] When the description of the followers of Jezebel, in this verse, is compared with what was before said of the Nicolaitans, (verse 14, 15.) the resemblance appears so great, that I am induced to believe it is the same heresy which is represented under both these names; namely, the doctrine of those who taught it was lawful to dissimulate our religious principles, and occasionally to conform to superstition and idolatry, in order to avoid persecution. And as Jezebel was so infamous an idolatress; and so great a mistress of seducing arts, there was an evident propriety in such a representation, 1 Kings xvi. 31; xxi. 25. Some have fancied this was some female heretic. Dr. Scott thinks it to have been Helena, the harlot of Simon Magus, the greatingleader of the unclean sect of the Gnosticks. (See

Scott's Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 231.) Whether these words refer to any woman who was in the plot, or only mean to describe a person of such seducing and dishonest practices, I cannot determine, though I rather incline to the latter. Compare ver. 15, note 6.

<sup>b</sup> Commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols.] Perhaps both of these might be the same; as it is well known idolatry is in many places in the Old Testament, and in several passages in this book, represented as adultery and fornication.

<sup>c</sup> I am he who searcheth—the hearts.] This manner of speaking is much more remarkable, than if it had only been said, that I search the heart; which remark answers the train of Mr. Emlyn's reasoning against the argument brought from this text to prove Christ's proper Deity

- sect. prove the justice of my proceeding with respect  
 v. to this society, as well as all others, and will  
 give to every one of you according to your  
 works, and according to those principles from  
 23. which I know they have proceeded. *But I say*  
 24. *to you who are faithful, even to the rest of those*  
*that are in Thyatira, As many as do not hold*  
*this pernicious doctrine, and who have not known*  
*the depths of Satan, as they proverbially speak,*  
 nor make themselves the instruments of accom-  
 plishing the designs of his infernal policy; *I*  
*will lay upon you no other burden,*<sup>a</sup> will not se-  
 verely reprove you for that mixture of human  
 infirmity, which is to be discerned every where.  
 25. *Nevertheless, what you have received as of Di-*  
 vine revelation and command, *hold fast till I*  
*come,* and let nothing prevail upon you to make  
 a sacrifice of your regard for me and my cause,  
 for neither my ability, nor inclination, to re-  
 ward those who are faithful, will ever be dimi-  
 26. nished. *And as for him that conquers, and*  
*keeps my works unto the end,* notwithstanding  
 the vigorous efforts of the enemies of my gos-  
 pel, to wrest it from him, or induce him to deny  
 it, though he should be ever so much exposed  
 and overborne now, *I will,* at length, *give him*  
*complete power and victory over all the nations*  
*that have combined against my people.*<sup>b</sup> *And*  
 27. *I will raise him to the dignity and glory of shar-*  
 ing with me in my final triumph; and *he shall*  
*rule them with a rod of iron, and they shall be*  
*at once dashed in pieces with it, like a potter's*  
*vessels:* in like manner, as *I have also received*  
 the promise of my Father in that ancient

will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers;) even as I received of my Father.

<sup>a</sup> No other burden.] Lord Barrington imagines this refers to the gospel addressed to *Gentile* people, now abridged with the Jewish polity. As if it had been said, Though things strangled, and blood, were formerly forbidden, as well as idolatry and fornication, yet I will not subject you to this injunction. Bar. iv. p. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Power over the nations.] This power over the nations, of breaking them to pieces like a potter's vessels, &c. cannot, I think, be understood, of temporal dominion: for as the promise is made to every conqueror, and many Christians fell by the op-

pressive power of the enemy, and would be degraded rather than exalted, if raised to the possession of any earthly dominion and triumph, it appears to be much properly explained of that final triumph of Christ over his enemies in the last day, when he shall crush them all to utter and irrecoverable ruin, and all his saints raised from the dead, and clothed with robes of glory, shall sit down with him on his throne, and constitute that illustrious body, which in, and with their exalted head shall exhibit every opposing power.

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II. 27.

oracle, (Psal. ii. 9.) the accomplishment of which all my faithful subjects shall see; for they shall behold all their enemies, however numerous and mighty, laid prostrate at their feet in the dust, and covered with everlasting confusion.

28 And I will  
open the morning star

*And I will give him, even every one who ap-28* proveth his fidelity to me, such lustre and glory, that he shall shine in my presence like *the morning star*, when its sprightly and cheerful beams break through the shades of night, and proclaim the approaching sun. *He, therefore, that hath* 29 *an ear, let him* attentively *hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*; for all the churches are concerned in the message I send to each; and the importance of the contents make them worthy of universal regard.

29 He that hath  
an ear, let him hear  
what the Spirit saith  
unto the churches.

v. III. 1.  
And unto the angel  
of the church in  
Sardis, write, These  
things, saith he, that  
hath the seven spirits  
of God, and the seven  
stars; I know  
thy works, that thou  
hast a name that thou  
 livest, and art dead.

*And to the angel, or minister, of the church in* Rev. III. 1  
*Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God*; he who presides over, and orders the dispensations of the Spirit, with respect to his various gifts and graces, and produces thereby such wonderful events as shall astonish all future ages; *and that hath in his hand the seven stars*, which represent the ministers of the churches, all whose motions he continues to govern and direct, according to his all-wise and gracious pleasure: *I know thy works*; that thou dost not answer that character which thou generally maintainest in neighbouring churches, for religion and piety. I know, *that thou hast a name that thou livest*; thou makest a splendid profession, and many of thy brethren are deceived by thy apparent zeal; *but thou art indeed dead*; there is little real religion lying at thy heart, nor do the uniform fruits of it prevail in thy life and conversation. *Be* 2 *watchful*, therefore, that the whole may not be lost; *and strengthen the things which remain, and which are ready to die*; for *I have not found thy works filled up in the sight of God*, with that care and fidelity with which they ought to have been discharged; and he, therefore, cannot behold thee with the same approbation and delight, as he does more active, more diligent, and more resolute Christians. And this thy declension in religion is the more aggravated, as thou hast had so many advantages for improvement. *Remember*—3

Be watchful, and  
strengthen the things  
which remain, that  
we ready to die: for  
I have not found thy  
works perfect before  
me.

Remember these

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III. 3.

*ber, therefore, how thou hast received, and heard: for though thou mayest forget these advantages, they are all distinctly in my view; and let it therefore be thy care to hold fast what yet remains; and to repent of that negligence by which thou hast lost so many opportunities: therefore, unless thou art watchful, I do now solemnly warn thee, that I will come upon thee by some alarming and awful interposition of my providence, on a sudden, as a thief, on those that are buried in sleep; and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee; and the surprise will throw thee into the greatest consternation and distress. But I will do thee the honour, and the justice, to say, that thou hast a few names, and people, even in Sardis, corrupt and indolent as the general state of it is, who have not polluted their garments with the abominations by which so many have contracted gross defilements: And, as they have been distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, I will distinguish them by my special favour, and raise them, ere long, to those seats of complete purity and glory, where they shall walk with me in white robes, and attend my joyful and triumphant train; for they are worthy of such distinguished honour, as they have been especially careful to keep themselves from those evils which have been generally prevailing around them.*

5 *As for the conqueror, he shall be clothed in white raiment; every victor shall wear the habit of festivity and triumph; and I will not blot out his name from the book of life;*<sup>a</sup> but

fore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of

[<sup>a</sup> *Walk with me in white.*] It is well known, that *white robes*, were worn on occasions of great joy, and sometimes in triumphant processions; to both which here is, probably, a reference, as indeed it seems that *triumph and feasting* would naturally go together. Priests also were clothed in *white*, and the addition of that dignity may also be implied, as certainly coming within the scheme of Christ with regard to his people. (Compare Rev. i. 6.) Some think here is an allusion to the custom of the Sanhedrim, when they examined the candidates for the *high-priesthood*; if they judged him worthy, they gave him a *white garment*; if unqualified,

he was sent out from among them in *mourning*. L'Enfant Introd. p. 86. See Ainsworth's Pref. to Gen.

[<sup>b</sup> *I will not blot out his name, &c.*] I think this plainly implies, that *some names* shall be blotted out from the book of life; and consequently, as nothing can occasion an alteration in the decree of God, I think it proves, that *the book of life* does not signify the catalogue of those whom God has absolutely purposed to save; but rather the catalogue of those who were to be considered as *heirs of the kingdom of heaven* in consequence of their Christian profession, till by apostasy from it they throw themselves out of that society to

life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

as he is inrolled among my faithful people, he shall ever continue in their number; and when the register shall be read over in the presence of God in the great day, *I will confess his name before my Father, and before the full assembly of his glorious angels*, and not be ashamed to acknowledge him as my friend and my favourite.

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V.  
Rev.  
III. 5.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

*He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to all the churches:* and let every one that hears, be animated by so glorious a hope, to exert his utmost efforts in this holy and honourable warfare.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET the disciples of Christ always remember, that his eye penetrates the most hidden recesses; that he *searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins* of the children of men: accordingly, let them take heed to cherish nothing, even in their hearts, which their great Master will behold with displeasure. There may *faith, and patience, and charity*, erect their throne; and may their dominion so prevail, that our last works, like those of the church of Thyatira, may be more than the first. And surely it is most reasonable, as we approach the end of our course, as we experience more of the vanity of life, and the substantial and solid pleasures of religion, that they should be so. But, alas! how much more common is the character of the church of Sardis, and of those who have only a name to live while they are dead? Censorious and uncharitable, as too great a part of the world is, are there not some who are ashamed and humbled in the view of the esteem which they are held in by their brethren, while conscious of so many inward, though unallowed infirmities, of so much deadness and coldness in religion, even where they would be most zealous and lively? Alas! how far are our works from being filled up before God! Let us often lament these our imperfections and declensions; let us deeply humble ourselves before God on account of them; and let us be as vigilant as possible, that we may strengthen those things, which if they do indeed remain, seem ready to die. The more general prevalence of such an indolent temper is, the more let us emulate the distinguished honour of those *few names in Sardis*, which had not *defiled their garments*; that we may *walk with them*; and with *Christ, in white raiment*; that we may arrive at that hap-

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iii. 1, 2.

which they before belonged; and it seems to intimate, that though the imperfection even of these *conquerors* might, in strict justice, have *deserved* it, yet Christ would spare them, and suffer them to continue

in the number of those who should finally be found registered, as *free* of the heavenly city; and who, in the great day, should be called up to *possess* it.

SECT. v. py state of everlasting purity, of everlasting festivity, of everlasting triumph, which our Divine Master has encouraged us to expect. We know not how unexpectedly he may come upon us: let us be always ready, always strenuous in maintaining a holy war against the enemies of our salvation; and then we shall conquer, we shall triumph; our name shall remain in the book of life; it shall be confessed by Christ before his Father and his holy angels: we shall share with him in his triumph over all the rebellious nations, in that day, when he *shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessels*: we shall for ever wear the lustre of the morning star; yea, we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Amen.

Chap. II. 26.

## S E C T. VI.

*The epistles, which Christ orders to be written to the two remaining churches, the Philadelphian, and Laodicean. Rev. III.*

## REVELATION III. 7.

SECT. VI. **AND** now to the angel, or minister, of the church in Philadelphia, write, *These things saith the Holy One, and the true One,*<sup>a</sup> *he, who claims perfect holiness, and invariable truth, as necessary and essential to his nature, in a manner which no creature can pretend to; he, whose authority in the church of God is so uncontrollable, that it may truly be said, he has the key of the house of David; he, who openeth, and no man shutteth,<sup>b</sup> *and shutteth and no man openeth; insomuch that Eliakim, who is spoken of in such terms of honour, (Isa. xxii. 22.) was only a type of him: I well know thy works, how exemplary they are; and behold, I have used the power of the key which is in my hand, in such a manner, that I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: I give thee a power and opportunity of spreading my gospel, which none shall take from thee; because thou hast, at least, a little strength; and thou**

REV. III. 7. \* **AND** to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, *These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth;*

8 I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast

<sup>a</sup> The holy One, the true One.] This is so peculiarly the prerogative of God, that I have sometimes wondered, no greater stress should have been laid upon it in proof of the deity of our blessed Redeemer, by many writers who have pressed other texts, of a much more du-

bious nature, to serve in the cause. (Compare chap. vi. 10.)

<sup>b</sup> Who openeth, and no man shutteth.] The office of lord-steward of the household, who hath the power of opening and shutting what apartments in the palace he pleaseth, is described by these terms.

kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that over-

hast used it well, and hast courageously kept my word, and hast not denied my name, though many attempts have been made to drive thee to do it. *Behold, I will give*, as it were, into thy power, *those hypocritical wretches [who are] indeed of the Synagogue of Satan*, and under all the solemn guise of religious worship, are carrying on his cause and interest; *they say they are Jews*, and pretend to be my people, *and are not; but lie.* *Behold, I say*, I will give them into thy power; and *I will make them to come and worship before thy feet;* and *they shall know that I have loved thee*, finding I have evidently supported thy cause and interest against all that have opposed it. *Because thou hast kept the*

*word of my patience*, that gospel, which I have myself by such patient suffering in my human nature established in the world, and by which I at once exercise and support the faith and patience of my people; *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try all the inhabitants of these parts of the earth*: my hand shall remarkably appear in sheltering thee from the dangers, by which others fall, and in strengthening thee in proportion to the trial. *Behold, I come quickly*, to

put an end to those exercises which are for the present so painful; *keep that which thou hast with resolute fidelity; that no man take thy crown* from thee, even that crown of everlasting glory which will be the gracious reward of thy continued fidelity. *As for the conqueror, I will*

<sup>c</sup> *Worship before thy feet.*] Were we more particularly acquainted with the history of these seven churches, in the times immediately succeeding the date of these epistles, we might perhaps find many remarkable illustrations of several passages in them, and of this among the rest: supposing, for instance, persons of considerable rank and dignity in Philadelphia, were converted to Christianity; and the interest of the synagogue here spoken of, was so weakened, or the heathen populace of the place so prejudiced against them, as that the chief members of the synagogue should find it necessary to court the protection of the Christians for the security of their per-

sons or effects; it will throw considerable light upon the place. The like observation may be applied to the following clause: *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, &c.* Dr. Smith has observed, (in his learned and accurate account of these parts, p. 134—141,) that the city of Philadelphia was the last of all the seven, here spoken of, which fell into the hands of the Turks; for whereas the rest were subdued by Uchah and Amurath: Philadelphia held out till the time of Bajazet. So that the remains of this society were preserved, when those of the rest were ruined. But how far that event might immediately be referred to in the words before us, I cannot certainly say.

SECT.

VI.

Rev. III. 9.



SECT. *make him a pillar of distinguished ornament and*

VI. *beauty; and I will not only fix him near, but*  
*in the temple of my God above, and he shall stand*

Rev.  
III. 12.

*there upon an unshaken and everlasting basis,*  
*so that he shall go out no more: and he shall bear*  
*the marks of immortal honour; for I will in-*  
*scribe upon him the name of my God, under whose*  
*auspicious influence the grand victory has been*  
*gained, and under whose protection this sacred*  
*monument of it shall for ever remain. And I*  
*will also inscribe the name of the city of my God,*  
*even the New Jerusalem, as it is that to which*  
*he belongs, and of which he is free, even that*  
*New Jerusalem, which is come down from heaven*  
*from my God, and shall soon be represented to*  
*thee, O John, in a most glorious vision; and*  
*he shall bear my new name, the name which I*  
*have acquired by that great expedition, which*  
*brought me into the world, and carried me*  
*through so many labours and sufferings; even*  
*that of the Redeemer of sinners; under which*  
*character I will own him for one of my redeem-*  
*ed, who fought under my banner, and overcame*  
*his enemies by my influence and my blood.*<sup>d</sup>

13 *He that hath an ear, let him attentively hear*  
*what the Spirit saith to the churches; for ad-*  
*dresses of this kind are made not to a particular*  
*person, or to one Christian society alone, but*  
*are indeed of more extensive, and even univer-*  
*sal concern.*

14 *And to the angel of the church, which is in*  
*Laodicea, write, These things saith he, who is*  
*the AMEN, the faithful and true Witness; at-*  
*testing those truths, which are of the utmost*  
*importance, on the most perfect knowledge of*

*cometh will I make a*  
*pillar in the temple*  
*of my God, and he*  
*shall go no more out:*  
*and I will write upon*  
*him the name of my*  
*God, and the name*  
*of the city of my*  
*God, which is New*  
*Jerusalem, which*  
*cometh down out of*  
*heaven from my God:*  
*and I will write upon*  
*him my new name.*

13 He that hath  
 an ear, let him hear  
 what the Spirit saith  
 unto the churches.

14 And unto the  
 angel of the church  
 of the Laodiceans,  
 write, These things  
 saith the Amen, the  
 faithful and true Wit-

<sup>d</sup> *I will make him a pillar, &c.] Few*  
*texts in the whole New Testament are*  
*more illustrated by antiquity than this.*  
*Great numbers of inscriptions are yet re-*  
*maining, brought from the Grecian cities*  
*of Europe and Asia, and some from*  
*islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos,*  
*in which the victories of eminent persons*  
*are commemorated. And as some of*  
*these were placed near the temples of their*  
*deities, others were in those temples, to*  
*signify their being put under the particu-*  
*lar protection of those deities; whose*  
*names therefore were inscribed upon*  
*them, and the names of the conquerors,*

*and of the cities to which they belonged;*  
*as also the names of the generals, by*  
*whose conduct the victory was gained.*  
*As all these circumstances suit such kind*  
*of martial victories, much more than*  
*those obtained in the Olympic games, so*  
*celebrated in antiquity, and so largely*  
*and elegantly described by Mr. West in*  
*his late dissertation on that subject. I*  
*think this text seems to justify the turn*  
*I have generally given in my paraphrase*  
*to those weighty passages, on which so*  
*much of our strength and comfort as Chris-*  
*tians depends.*

ness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 F know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

18 I counsel thee

them, and with most unerring exactness; yea, he who is *the beginning of the creation of God*, by whom it was produced, and who is the Head and Governor of all that he has made: I

*know thy works*, and all the particulars of thy conduct; *that thou art neither cold nor hot*, that thou art growing very indifferent in religion, though thou canst not allow thyself entirely to cast it off; now, this is so disagreeable to me, that *I wish* thou wouldst determine one way or another; and that it might be said, *thou wert either cold or hot*<sup>†</sup>; if thou really thinkest it not worth thy regard, reject it entirely; but, if indeed thou art convinced of its truth and importance, act with a steady conformity to that conviction. *Therefore, because thou art luke-*

*warm, and neither cold nor hot*, this indifference of thine is as disagreeable to me as liquor, in this condition, is to the stomach; and therefore to pursue this similitude, odious as it may seem, I must tell thee, that if thou persistest in such a disposition, *I will cast thee out of my mouth* with loathing. *Because thou sayest I am wealthy*,<sup>17</sup> *and have enriched myself* by my own wisdom and virtue, *and have need of nothing*; imagining thy state in religion to be so very prosperous and happy; *and in this spiritual lunacy* into which thou art fallen, like a miserable beggar who fancies himself a prince, *knowest not that thou art wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, in a most deplorable condition, destitute of every desirable blessing; *I counsel thee*, that<sup>18</sup> with an humble sense of thy condition, so extremely unhappy, thou apply to him who alone

\* *The beginning of the creation of God.*] Mr. Fleming would render it, *the efficient cause of God's creation*. But as it is certain, that *aper* has not always that signification, I judge it safe to give what is more commonly the sense of it.

† So disagreeable to me, that I wish thou wouldst determine one way or another.] Mr. Lowman observes, that the clause, *I would thou wert cold or hot*, may be understood as expressing great dislike, not as a proper wish, or expression of what men really desire.

‡ *Wretched and pitiable &c.*] The sad account which is here given of the Lac-

dicean church, which is placed last, when compared with what is said of the glorious state of Christianity in the last ages of the world, may, I think, convince any attentive reader, that these epistles are not to be understood in a prophetic sense, as expressive of the state and character of the Christian church in different periods of time. It may also be observed, that at that rate the middle ages of the church, which were in fact most corrupt, must have answered to Pergamos and Thyatira, which are described in these epistles, as in the most flourishing and happy state

SECT.  
VI.  
Rev.  
III. 15.

SECT. VI. is capable of helping thee. And as I require  
 VI. no price, or equivalent for my treasures, but  
 Rev. only a conviction of such an incapacity to make  
 III. 18. an adequate return for them, I advise thee, in  
 that way, *to buy of me a full supply for all thy necessities; blessings, as desirable as gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest indeed be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear.*

Apply to me for an interest in my righteousness and sanctifying grace; that thou mayest be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue which can render thee lovely in his sight. And whereas thou art blinded with such unhappy self-conceit, come, *and anoint thy eyes with my sovereign eye-salve, that thou mayest see;* for I can bring thee to right sentiments of thyself, and of thy state; and can teach thee to judge of

19 objects according to their real worth. In the mean time, imagine not, that what may seem severe in this address, proceeds from any unkindness to thee: for *whomsoever I love, I reprove and correct.* Instead, *therefore,* of ungratefully quarrelling at so kind an admonition, set thyself immediately and diligently to improve it: *be more zealous for the future, than thou hast ever been in time past, and deeply repent of thy prevailing indolence and degeneracy.*

20 Behold, I have stood for a long time, and *I still stand at the door and knock;* waiting for admittance into your hearts. *If any man hear my voice, with a due regard, and open the door;* if he welcome me with the affection due to such a friend, and such a Saviour, how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character may formerly have been, *I will enter into his house,* and, like some princely guest, will bring my own rich and delightful entertainment along with me; *I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me;* I will treat him with the most endearing and familiar friendship, accept the tokens of his affection, and give him

21 the most solid evidences of mine. Let this variety of motives then engage you, O ye Laodiceans, to shake off that dull lethargic temper which has so long given me cause of complaint; and for your further encouragement,

to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that

overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. I hear the last promise which I make to all who exert themselves in that holy warfare, to which I am calling you, with becoming vigour and resolution; *as for the valiant conqueror, I will give him to sit down with me upon my glorious and exalted throne in the heavenly world; as I also myself have conquered the enemies which violently assaulted me in the days of my flesh, and am set down with my Father upon his throne;* my faithful servants shall partake with me of this honour in the great day of my appearing, and shall live and reign with me for ever. *He, therefore, that hath an ear to hear, let him be all attention on this occasion, and hear what the Spirit saith to the churches;* regarding what has been addressed to each as intended to afford matter of general instruction.

SECT.

VI.

Rev.

III. 21.

12 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. 22

#### IMPROVEMENT.

IN what age, or in what place, will the church be entirely free from this Laodicean temper, which is so justly complained of by our Lord, and represented as so loathsome to him; I mean, an indolence in religion, often joined with arrogance and spiritual pride too, as if great attainments were made, where it is almost matter of doubt, whether the very essentials be remaining! Let us not indulge in a vain conceit of our own wisdom, and riches, and sufficiency; but let us thankfully hearken to that kind invitation, which he here gives us, to come and purchase that of him, without money and without price, by which we may be truly and substantially enriched; that by which we may attain to real knowledge and true discernment; and may be clothed with ornaments and glories, which shall render us amiable in the eyes of God. How long has our *compassionate Saviour* been waiting upon us! How long has he *stood knocking at the door!* And O, for what guests hath he been excluded! who have filled our hearts and taken the throne in them, while the entrance has been denied to the *Lord of glory and of grace!* Let us humble ourselves in the dust before him, and intreat that he would now enter as into his own habitation; that he would do us the honour to sup with us; that he would cause us to sup with him; opening to us the stores of his love and bounty, and causing our souls to rejoice in his salvation. "Awaken us, O blessed Jesus, to give thee a most cheerful admittance; and then shew thy love to us by chastisements and rebuke, than suffer us entirely to forfeit it, by continued insensibility and negligence. Holy and true, who hast the key of David, exert thy

Verse

15

16, 17

18

20

19

7

SECT.

VI.

Verse

8, 10

power, irresistible in heaven and on earth, in opening our hearts: and O, set before us an open door of service; and give us to use it to the utmost, for thy glory. Strengthen us to keep the word of thy patience, and make us unshaken in our attachment to thee, in every hour of temptation, which may come upon the earth, that none may take away our crown."

- 11 Whatever our trials may be, let us rejoice in this, that they will be only for a short duration; for our Lord is coming quickly: whatever our combat may be, let us arm ourselves with faith in those glorious promises, which our Lord makes to them that persevere and overcome.
- 12 Have we not experienced the pleasure of filling a place in the house of God on earth? But this sacred satisfaction, and the holy season which affords it, is quickly over: let us long for the blessed time, when we shall be fixed as immovable pillars in the temple of God above. And O, may we now wear, engraven on our hearts, *the name of our God, and of his heavenly city*, and the *new name* of our triumphant Redeemer, as a token for good, that we shall bear the inscription in bright and everlasting characters above. But even this most expressive promise was not equal to all the purposes of a Saviour's love: that nothing, therefore, might be wanting to enkindle the most generous
- 21 ambition, he has been pleased to speak of our *sitting down with him upon his throne, as he is sat down on his Father's throne*. And who then will ever scruple to suffer with him, when thus assured of reigning with him in everlasting glory! O, who would grudge to resign, not merely the accommodations of life, but even an earthly throne, in the hope of one so much more radiant, exalted, and permanent! *Fear not little flock! it is your Father's, and your Saviour's, good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, (Luke xii. 32.) and he animates you to pursue it with such compassionate earnestness, as if he could hardly enjoy it himself, unless it were communicated to you.

## S E C T. VII.

*Another scene now opens on the Apostle John; in which God is represented as enthroned in celestial glory, surrounded with the hieroglyphical representation of angels, and the glorified church.* Rev. IV. 1, to the end.

## REVELATION IV. 1.

**AFTER** these things, and after Jesus had dictated to me these seven epistles, *I saw, and behold, it seemed as if a door were opened in*

REV. IV. 1.

**AFTER** this, I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and

the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

heaven, near to which I was brought; so that I was able to look in, and see what passed, and was transacted there. *And the first voice which I heard before, [was] as loud as the sound of a trumpet; and while speaking to me, it seemed to issue out from thence; and it said, Come up hither; and having given thee this charge relating to present things, I will shew thee what shall be afterwards. And immediately I was in the Spirit<sup>a</sup>, and an extraordinary vision presented itself to my intellectual view; for behold, and observe diligently a circumstance of so great importance; a throne was set in heaven, to represent that of the blessed God; and there was one sitting upon it, of a majestic form and appearance, and arrayed in robes of glory, suited to the situation in which he was. And he<sup>3</sup> who sat [on it] was, in the form and lustre of his appearance, like a jasper and sardine stone<sup>b</sup>; and a rainbow, in which the bright green, in appearance like the vivid, though soft and agreeable colour of an emerald, [was] especially prevalent, appeared round about the throne; expressive of that propitiousness and kindness, and of that covenant-relation to his people, which the blessed God is pleased to acknowledge in the*

SECT VII.

Rev. IV. 1

<sup>a</sup> *I was in the Spirit.*] This phrase signifies, to be under a strong and supernatural impulse, caused by the miraculous operation of the Spirit of God acting on the imagination in such a manner as to open extraordinary scenes, which had not any exact external archetype. And it is much illustrated by the view presented to Ezekiel, when he sat in his house among the elders of the people, (Ezek. viii. 1,) who probably saw nothing but the prophet himself, as one in a trance, or extasy, or whose thoughts were so attentively fixed, as to be insensible of what passed around him. We are not therefore to imagine, that the person sitting on the throne, or the four animals, or the four and twenty elders, were real beings existing in nature; though they represented, in a figurative manner, things that did really exist. And though it is possible, that aerial scenes might, by Divine, or angelic power, have been formed, I think it much more probable, that all that passed was purely in the imagination of St. John. This will

keep us, in our interpretation, clear of a thousand difficulties, not to say absurdities, which would follow from a contrary supposition; namely, that there is in heaven an animal, in the form of a lamb, to represent Christ; and that there are such living creatures as are here described; and that God himself appears in a human form, &c. And this observation I make once for all, desiring that it may be remembered, and applied as occasions present.

<sup>b</sup> *Like jasper, &c.*] I do not suppose this refers so much to the colour of these stones, as to their lustre, and the radiancy of the light as reflected from them, when perfectly polished. The rainbow of emerald was, no doubt, to express a covenant of peace; of which the rainbow was, with Noah, an appointed token. And that lively and cheering colour seems to have been particularly mentioned, not to imply there were no other, but that the proportion of green was greater than ordinary. Compare Ezek. i. 26.

SECR. midst of his transcendent glory. (Compare

VII. Gen. ix. 16.) *And, in an extensive circle,*

*round about the throne of God [there were]*

Rev. *twenty-four other thrones; and on the thrones I*

IV. 4. *saw twenty-four elders sitting, as an emblem of*

*the Old Testament church, and also of the New;*

*and they were clothed in a habit somewhat re-*

*sembling that of the Levites, or Priests, with*

*white raiment; and, in token of their royal dig-*

*niety, they had upon their heads golden crowns.*

5 *And out of the throne there came flashes of vi-*

*vid lightnings, and thunders, and sometimes*

*articulate voices; and seven lamps of fire [were]*

*burning continually before the throne; which are*

*the seven Spirits of God; that is, they represent*

*a great variety of the Spirit's operations, and those*

*of good angels who act in subserviency to him.*

6 *And before the throne [there was] correspond-*

*ent to the brazen sea in Solomon's temple,*

*(1 Kings vii. 23.) a great laver, or sea, which*

*was made all of pure pellucid glass, which was*

*clear like crystal itself. And in the middle of*

*the space between the throne and the circle about*

*the throne, [there were] four living creatures;*

*and, to signify their intelligence, and quickness*

*of observance, they appeared full of eyes, both*

7 *before and behind. These four animals, of a*

*very extraordinary form, seem to have been in-*

*tended as hieroglyphical representations of the*

*angelic nature<sup>e</sup>: and the head of the first ani-*

<sup>e</sup> *Twenty-four elders.*] The number seems to allude to that of the *patriarchs and apostles*; and they are called *Elders*, as the presidency of elders was common among the Jews. And these might be considered as representatives of the church, paying homage at the throne in name of the rest.

<sup>d</sup> *Seven lamps of fire, &c.*] Some think these are the *seven Spirits of God*, that is, *angels* spoken of afterwards, chap. v. 6; but I at present doubt, whether they may not be distinguished, *Lamps of fire*, or *lambent flames*, like those that fell upon the apostles on the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 3.) might perhaps be emblems of the blessed Spirit of God in its various and powerful operations; especially those by which the minds of intelligent created beings are illuminated

and purified. And the *Spirits standing before the throne*, might be distinct appearances of *angelic forms*; as it is certain some of them were, from the actions they afterwards performed: *sounding the seven trumpets, &c.*]

<sup>e</sup> *Four living creatures.*] It was a most unhappy mistake in our translators, to render the *ἑρμῆς ζῶα, beasts*: it certainly signifies any other kind of *animals*, that is of creatures which have *animal life*, as well as *beasts*. The word *beast* not only degrades the signification, but the animals here mentioned, have parts and appearances, which *beasts* have not, and are represented as in the highest sense *rational*.

<sup>f</sup> *Hieroglyphical representations, &c.*] It is well known, the *Ancients* (borrowing them I suppose from the *Egyptians*.)

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold,

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes, before and behind.

7 And the first beast

was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

*mal*, in this marvellous composition, [was] like a lion, to signify the courage and vigour with which these celestial beings execute the commands of God, and the irresistible strength with which they encounter and vanquish all opposition. And the head of the second animal [was] like a calf, or young bullock, to signify the firmness, patience, and perseverance, with which they go through the labours which God has appointed them. And the third animal had a face like a man, to express by the image of the only rational creature on this earth, the clearness of intelligence, and the strength of reason, with which, in a vastly superior degree, they are endowed. And the fourth animal was like a swift flying eagle, with its wings displayed, and with quickness in its eye and motion, to signify the sprightliness and activity, and incomparable velocity, with which these celestial spirits fly from world to world, to execute the commands they receive from their Sovereign. And, though the heads of these four wonderful living creatures were different, yet they had in the rest of their body, one form ; and they had each of them six wings round about ; so that their body seemed covered with the rich plumage of them.

SECT.  
VII.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about

dealt much in hieroglyphics, by which natural and moral truths were expressed. Dr. Middleton, in his curious collection of antiquities, presents us with one so remarkable, that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. It is a copy of a gem, in which a man's face, an elephant's head, a peacock, and a sceptre, are joined together. He thinks it was intended as an hieroglyphic, or emblematical representation of Socrates ; as the face bears a strong resemblance to the pictures usually given of him. He supposes the human face to represent that of Socrates, and the other figures, those beautiful and divine images which were in his mind. The peacock, being the most beautiful bird, may denote the beauty of his virtues ; the sceptre, his majesty and authority ; the elephant, the strength and fortitude of his mind. And for the same reason, he observes, it might be used to express the character of a philosopher in general ; but especially, the Stoic's wise man, who was furnished with all kinds of virtues and perfections, being the only beautiful and

valiant man, and a king, whatever his circumstances might happen to be. Middleton's Antiq. Tab. xxi. § 10, p. 243—245. There can, I think, be no doubt, but these are the cherubim described by Ezekiel, (chap. i.) which therefore should be carefully compared with this representation. To consider this appearance as an emblem of deity, which is the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson and his followers, appears to me a very great absurdity. Nor can I think, with Mr. Jackson, that they are merely intended to signify the homage paid to God by all terrestrial creatures. Another peculiar and extraordinary hypothesis, with regard to them, has been proposed to me, and may perhaps be laid before the world ; and therefore, I think it most respectful to the reverend and ingenious author, not to anticipate his own design. Some have thought these animals represent spirits of an order superior to angels, taken up wholly in contemplation. See Reynolds of angels, p. 6.



- SECT.** *And within [they were] all full of eyes, to signify* him, and *they were*  
**VII.** *their quick discernment of every object around* full of eyes within;  
*them. And they rest not day nor night; but* and they rest not day  
**Rev.** *they stand in the Divine presence, saying with* and night, saying,  
**IV. 8.** *united voices, (as the seraphim represented in* Holy, holy, holy,  
*the vision which Isaiah saw, Isa. vi. 2, 3.)* Lord God Almighty,  
*"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,\* who* which was, and is,  
*"wast, and art, and art to come:" thus giving* and is to come.  
*to God in continual acts of adoration, the glory*  
*of his natural and moral perfections, and ac-*  
*knowledging their immutability from everlasting*  
*and to everlasting. And while the living crea-*  
*tures are thus giving glory and honour, and*  
*thanks to him that sits upon the throne, and ad-*  
*dressing their sublime and harmonious anthems*  
*of praise to him, who liveth for ever and ever,*  
*with unwearied vigour and activity of mind;*  
**10** *The four and twenty elders, whom I described*  
*before as themselves sitting on majestic thrones,*  
*fall down in the Divine presence, even before*  
*him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship*  
*him that liveth for ever and ever; and they cast*  
*down their crowns before the throne, in token of*  
*their homage to that transcendently glorious be-*  
*ing, from whose sovereign grace and unparal-*  
*leled munificence they received them; saying,*  
**11** *at the same time, Worthy art thou, O Lord,*  
*to receive the ascription of glory, and honour, and*  
*power; for thou hast, by thine almighty energy,*  
*created all things, and for thy sovereign will,*  
*they are and were created; their first production,*  
*and continued existence, is owing to the riches*  
*of thy free goodness; and therefore, they are*  
*all under the strictest obligations, according to*  
*their respective natures, to subserve the pur-*  
*poses of thy glory.*

9 And when those  
beasts give glory, and  
honour, and thanks  
to him that sat on the  
throne, who liveth  
for ever and ever,

10 The four and  
twenty elders fall  
down before him that  
sat on the throne,  
and worship him that  
liveth for ever and  
ever, and cast their  
crowns before the  
throne, saying,

11 Thou art wor-  
thy, O Lord, to re-  
ceive glory, and ho-  
nour, and power: for  
thou hast created all  
things, and for thy  
pleasure they are,  
and were created.

## IMPROVEMENT.

AND should not we likewise fall down with the angels and glorified spirits, and pay some homage to the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, though it be impossible for us to equal theirs? For  
 Verse 1. ever adored be the Divine grace, that a door is opened in hea-

\* *Holy, holy, holy, &c.*] This anthem is that which Isaiah tells us he heard the seraphim sing; and it is observable, that

many other hymns recorded in this book, are borrowed from the Old Testament.

*Reflections on the worship paid by the living creatures.*

ven; in consequence of which, even before we enter, we are allowed to look in; and thus to confirm our faith, and to animate our devotion; which, alas! after all, is too ready to decline and languish. That it may be greatly invigorated, let us look up to the throne, and to him that sitteth thereupon; and rejoice to see that peaceful emblem with which the seat of his glory is surrounded, the rainbow of vivid and pleasant green, signifying that the majestic Being who fills it, is the covenant God of all his believing and obedient people, and that mercy and love reign triumphant in the whole constitution of that perpetual covenant.

Let us contemplate with veneration the blessed angels, the ministers of God, who do his pleasure, represented here under hieroglyphical characters, as possessed of amazing strength and courage, resolution and patience; of the sublimest reason, of the most deep and penetrating sagacity, active and pure as flames of fire; and with these lofty ideas in our minds, let us ardently pray that the will of God may be so done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Let us also remember the elders here mentioned, the representatives of the church of the Redeemed, seated on glorious thrones, clothed in that white raiment, which is the righteousness of the saints, and adorned with crowns of glory. And let us especially consider, how the angels and the saints are employed: they rest not day nor night from breathing out the most ardent devotions; they feel nothing of that weariness and languor with which we are too frequently invaded in this state of mortality, even in our best moments and divinest frames; but they cry continually, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come; they give glory, and honour, and thanksgiving to him that sitteth on the throne.* And infinitely worthy is he to receive it: He who is the Almighty Creator, He who is the ever-present, and ever-gracious Supporter of all! *Thou art worthy, O Lord, thou alone art worthy;* and though thou withholdest from us the face of thy throne, while we dwell in these tabernacles of clay, yet as we are thy creatures, thy rational creatures, we partake of thy protection and bounty; and, feeble as our faculties are, and dark as the world is in which we dwell, we are able to discover thee as our Almighty Creator, our constant Preserver, our never-failing Benefactor. And, as such, may we daily worship and adore thee, with our feeble voices in this state of mortality; that when we are duly prepared, we may begin a nobler song, and join in the sublimer anthems and hallelujahs above. Amen.

## S E C T. VIII.

*The vision of the sealed book, and of the Lamb that was slain, who was found worthy to open it, and on that account received the acclamation of the whole choir of angels and saints. Rev. V. throughout.*

## REVELATION V. 1.

S E C T.

VIII.

Rev.

V. 1.

AND, having observed the particulars mentioned above, *I saw on the right-hand of him who sat on the glorious throne already described, the volume of a book, or scroll, written on both sides, within and without;*<sup>a</sup> for though I saw only the outside, perceiving it inscribed with characters, I naturally concluded the inside was full; and, as it was rolled up, it was sealed with seven strong seals, each of which belonged to a distinct leaf. And I saw a mighty angel, who wore, in his appearance, the evident marks of dignity and power, *proclaiming, with a great voice, and saying, Who is worthy to open the mysterious book which is in the hand of God, and to loose its seals, and so to disclose its wonderful contents?* And upon this I saw an universal blank confusion upon every countenance; so that it plainly appeared that *no one* among all the creatures of God, *in heaven, or upon earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.* And, as I had an earnest desire to know the contents, and had pleased myself with a secret expectation that some extraordinary discovery was to be made to me, and to the church, from thence, it grieved me exceedingly, inasmuch that *I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open and read the book; nor, indeed, so much as to look into it.* And as the grand act of adoration,

## REV. V. 1.

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back-side sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the

<sup>a</sup> Written on both sides, *within and without.*] Mr. Lowman, after Grotius, hath observed, that there ought to be a stop after the word *within*, (*lowbr,*) and that it should be rendered, *written within, and sealed on the backside.* But the learned Dr. Hammond hath very well defended the sense given in the paraphrase; observing, that it appears in the process,

that the opening of every single seal brings forth some new representation; which could not be the case, if all the seals were on the back-side; for then they must all be opened, before any part of the book could be discovered, &c. And therefore it must be concluded, that each seal belongs to a distinct leaf.

and the Lamb was seen ready to open the book.

elders saith unto me, Weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

in which the elders had joined with the living creatures, to him that sat on the throne, was over, one of the elders said to me, Weep not ; behold, the Lion, who is of the tribe of Judah, (that excellent person to whom the people ascribe to Judah, in which he was described under the token of a lion, to represent his invincible strength, by which he shall triumph over all his enemies, (Gen. xlix. 9, 10.) principally referred to) he hath conquered this great difficulty : He, who is Root, that was to spring from the stock of David, when it seemed to be withered in the earth, had prevailed to open the book, and to loose its seven seals ; so that thou shalt soon hear its contents ; for he is appointed by God to penetrate and discover those secret decrees, which are concealed from every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. And I beheld, and lo, to my great astonishment, in the middle space, between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, who made a kind of semicircle about them, there stood this illustrious Person, whose title I had just been hearing ; and, though he was spoken of by the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to express the terrors of his wrath against his implacable enemies, the symbol of his person, in this mysterious vision, was very different ; for he appeared as a Lamb, who had been slain for sacrifice, and wore the recent marks of slaughter, in the blood on his throat and breast ; and this Lamb was of a very uncommon form, having seven horns and seven eyes, instead of two of each ; and this I understood as a mysterious representation of extraordinary power and knowledge, and of the wonderful degree in which the Spirit of God was poured out upon the Person whom this visionary Lamb represented. for these are the seven Spirits of God,<sup>b</sup> sent forth into all the earth ; they represent that Divine

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth

<sup>b</sup> Seven spirits of God } Comparing this text with chap. viii. 2. I must acknowledge, that it is indeed to be understood of angels. Mr Mede infers from hence, that there are, in fact, seven archangels, who preside over all the rest. But I cannot allow the consequence to be certain. We sometimes

read of four spirits, sent forth as these are said to be. (Zech. vi. 5) and, I think, the whole it amounts to, is, that there are many celestial spirits, who are the instruments of that providence which Christ exercises over the earth, who bring to him in account of what passes, and receive and execute his commands. But,

energy, which operates every where; and of exerting which, the most illustrious angels have often the honour to be the ministers. *And he came near to the seat of Majesty, and took the book out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne;* which I understood as a symbol, to intimate that the Lord Jesus Christ whom I knew to be represented by this slaughtered Lamb, was appointed to reveal the secret decrees of God, and to give me those discoveries which I so much desired to receive. *And when he received the book in the manner I have described, the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders, fell down before the Lamb,* in token of humble reverence and adoration; and these elders appeared as a choir of humble worshippers in the temple of God, *having every one harps of gold, with which they played in sweet harmony, to aid the music of their voices; and they had also golden vials, or censers, full of perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints;* for, as I understood these elders to be the representatives of the church, I apprehended that, in allusion to the incense offered in the temple while the people were praying, this circumstance had a reference to prayer, and was intended to shew how acceptable it is to God, when it proceeds from an holy and upright heart. *And they sang a new song, excellent in its kind, and composed on a much greater occasion, and in much sublimer strains of Divine harmony, than those which the priests and Levites sang in the temple at Jerusalem; saying, Worthy art thou to take the book from the hand of God, and to open the seals thereof: for thou, O blessed Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, thou wast slain to expiate our guilt, and thou hast redeemed us to God by thy precious blood,*

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God

by the way, this will no more prove that he is under a necessity of receiving intelligence from them, or of using their assistance, than the parallel passage of Zechariah will prove it of God the Father. Zech. iv. 2, 10. But Dr. Scott very justly argues, that as they are called the seven eyes of the Lord in that text, and here of the Lamb, it is an argument

for the exaltation of the Man Christ Jesus, above the highest angel in heaven.

<sup>c</sup> Vials, or censers.] These, (as Mr. Lowman observes,) were not small bottles, such as are now called vials; but cups on a plate, like a tea-cup and saucer, in allusion to the censers of gold in which the priests burned incense in the temple

as did likewise a great multitude of angels:

by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of a justly incensed Deity; whose servants and favourites we are now become, in consequence of thy kind and gracious interposition. And we are now assembled round his throne, out of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, near and afar off, sacred and profane, learned and barbarous; wherever we were dispersed, thou hast found us, and into whatever bondage and misery we were sunk, thy power and thy mercy have rescued us; And thou hast made us to our

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

God, kings and priests; we are robed in purity and majesty, we are crowned with gold; and here we appear in these priestly offices, which we perform with the splendour of princes; and we shall reign on earth: the Christian cause shall prevail through all ages; while the happy souls who have passed courageously through their trials upon earth, come hither in their appointed seasons, and share the honours of thy triumphant kingdom. And I beheld this glorious scene 11 with inexpressible pleasure; and while my soul was all attention, I also heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures<sup>d</sup>, which betokened in general the angelic nature, and of the elders which represented the church. And a multitude appeared joining the choir, so exceeding great, that the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands; I was ready to apprehend that neither thousands nor millions were sufficient to express them. And there was not so much as 12

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

a jarring voice, or a cold and languid heart in the whole assembly; but, with united ardour and harmony, they were saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered, to receive power over universal nature, and all the riches it can boast. Worthy is he, to whom we should ascribe consummate and unsearchable wisdom, and resistless might, and peerless honour, and resplendent glory, and immortal

<sup>d</sup> Of many angels, and of the living creatures.] This plainly shews, that there was an appearance of angels, as well as of these animals which repre-

sented their nature; a circumstance, which I do not remember in the vision of Ezekiel.

RECT. VII. blessing; even he, who once appeared under a cloud of weakness and poverty, and under the imputation of folly, loaded with dishonour and infamy, with reproaches and curses: worthy is he, of all the dignity and glory, the benediction and homage of the heavenly world, throughout

13 the endless ages of eternity! And while the multitude of the heavenly hosts were singing this sublime anthem, *every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, every thing that are in them*, in every various form of nature, seemed to echo back the voice; and I heard them saying, *To him who sits upon the throne, and to his Son the Lamb*, the worthy partaker of his throne and kingdom, [be] perpetual blessing, and the profoundest honour, and consummate glory, and

14 almighty strength ascribed for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen, to this hymn, to testify their hearty concurrence; and, at the same time, the twenty-four elders fell down before the throne, and worshipped him who liveth for ever and ever; acknowledging him to be infinitely superior to all those services which the most exalted powers of created nature are capable of rendering.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen, And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Verse It should fill us with unutterable joy, when we lift up our eyes 1 to the throne of God, that we there discern the Lamb wearing the marks of slaughter. We should then gratefully remember his dying love; for it is his precious blood which cleanses us from all sin, and emboldens our addresses to God, conscious as we are that our guilt is attended with great aggravations. Surely, had it been queried, with respect to the great atonement to be made for our transgressions, as it was with respect to the opening these 3, 4 seals, Who is worthy to complete this precious undertaking? we should have seen with unspeakable anguish, that none in heaven, 5 or on earth, would have been found equal to the task. But here

\* *In the sea.*] As the inhabitants of the watery elements are necessarily mute, I suppose we are not to understand by this, that they seemed to grow vocal in the praises of Christ upon this occasion; but rather, that *heaven, earth, and sea*, is used to signify, that *all nature*, in its different

ways, concurred in the praise; that is, that the whole constitution of it contributed to furnish out matter of praise; just as inanimate as well as rational creatures are called upon to praise God in several of the psalms, especially Psalm cxlviii.

likewise, the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, has prevailed. How divinely is he furnished for the high station he sustains, and for all the glorious services assigned to him! What amazing power, what adorable wisdom is implied in the *seven horns*, and *seven eyes*, with which he is here delineated? and O! what love, in submitting to be slain, that he might redeem us to God by his blood! With the prayers of the saints, which come up before God as incense, may they ever mingle their most ardent praises for this Divine condescension. And out of gratitude to their Redeemer, let them rejoice to see the glorious change in his condition, from his humiliation and sufferings on earth, to his exaltation and reward in heaven: and let them ardently long for the happy season, when the full choir of the redeemed, from every nation, and people, and tongue, shall unite in this joyful acclamation, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*—In this world the disciples of Christ are only a little flock, but when they stand together upon the heavenly mountain, they shall appear *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*; and all the harmony of their voices, and all the ardour of their souls, inconceivably improved, as all their powers will be, shall be united on this happy occasion. Form us, O Lord, we intreat thee, for this Divine employment, and teach us in some measure to anticipate its pleasure, in these regions below. Even now, in spirit and intention, we prostrate ourselves before thee, and lay down the crowns which faith, as it were, hath already received, at thy feet; giving glory to him who sitteth upon the throne, and celebrating the victories and honours of the Lamb.

## SECT. IX.

*An account of the opening of the six first seals, and of the awful events which accompanied the opening of each. Rev. VI. throughout.\**

REV. VI. 1. REVELATION VI. 1.  
AND I saw when the Lamb opened I COULD not but be all attention to this wonderful scene; and I saw when the Lamb opened

\* The vision of the seals.] I am vastly more obliged to that ingenious and excellent commentator, Mr. Lowman, for what I understand of this book, than to any other writer whatsoever. And, as I think his celebrated and valuable scheme of interpretation, the most satisfactory, and which indeed throws considerable light upon the series of prophecy, I shall present my readers with a short view of

his plan, under the several visions; referring the more curious to the commentary itself. But I would first observe, with regard to this celebrated performance, though there is, in many particulars, a beautiful resemblance between the prophetic representations and the events supposed to be correspondent to them; and though the historical facts are represented with great learning and judg-



- ECT. one of the seven seals of the book, which he had taken out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne; and I heard one of the four living creatures, which said, as with a voice of thunder, Come, and see the wonders which are now presenting themselves. And I saw, and behold a white horse appeared; and he who sat thereon had a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows hanging at his back; and to express his royal dignity as the King both of the church and of the world, there was given to him a crown of gold, and he went forth conquering and to conquer: I understood that he was to gain signal victories, and that the series of them was immediately to begin. (Compare Psal. xlv. 3; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11.<sup>b</sup>)
- 3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying, as the former had done when the first was opened, Come, and see. And another horse came out,<sup>d</sup> [which
- opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come, and see.
- <sup>c</sup> And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.
- <sup>3</sup> And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see.
- <sup>4</sup> And there went out another horse

ment; yet the correspondence between the prophecies and the events is not in all respects, so clear and evident, as might have been expected; nor can we always say, why the events in question are represented by one of the emblems used, rather than by another. However, he has finely illustrated many passages, especially by similar phrases from the prophetic books of the Old Testament, in which he is quite unequalled; and hath made out so much, particularly with respect to the first, and beginning of the third period, as evidently proves this book to be a glorious confirmation of Christianity, and worthy our most attentive and diligent examination.—This learned and accurate writer, then, divides the prophetic parts of this book into seven periods. The first represented by the seals, shows the state of the church under the heathen Roman emperors, from A. D. 95, to A. D. 323. II. Period, of the trumpets, in its state from Constantine, A. D. 337, to A. D. 750. III. Period, of the vials, its state in the times of the last head of Roman government, represented by the beast, for 1260 years, from about the year 756, to A. D. 2016. IV. Period, the millennium, from A. D. 2000, to A. D. 3005. V. Period, Satan, loosed for a little season, and then destroyed. VI. Period, the resurrection and final judgment. VII. Period, the heavenly state.

<sup>b</sup> First seal, &c.] This refers to the triumph of Christianity over Jewish and heathen opposition, by the labours of its first preachers.

<sup>c</sup> The second living creature.] As each of these living creatures is represented as speaking successively, I think it confirms what was advanced in sect. vii. note f, relating to the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson, who supposes the four living creatures, taken together, to be an emblem of the Deity.

<sup>d</sup> Another horse came out.] Mr. Lowman thinks, that the leaves of the book were so adjusted, that on opening the first seal the first leaf unfolded; and on it there was drawn, in a vivid and beautiful picture, a man mounted on a white horse; and that what is described on opening those that follow, is an account of the various pictures which John saw delineated on the several leaves. But as we have an acknowledgment, not only of the appearance of these things, but of their motion, and their voice; and especially, of a change in the state of several of them, particularly of the souls under the altar; (ver. 9.) I conclude, that the scene did not lie in the leaf of the book, but arose in vision as the rest; and that the events described, seemed successively to pass before the eyes of John. And indeed, I think it apparent that the state of the vision he at first saw, was something al-

## On opening the third seal, a black horse :

that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

seemed to betoken some great slaughter and desolation to be made by approaching wars: for he [was] red; and it was given to him, who sat upon it, to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay each other. And, as a farther token of this, there was given to him a great sword or falchion in his hand, by which he might make terrible devastation.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, as the two former had done, Come, and see. And I saw, and beheld, there appeared a black horse, which might betoken an approaching famine, by the emblematical and memorable circumstances which attended his entrance on the scene; for, he that sat upon him had a pair of scales in his hand, to imply that men should eat their bread by weight, and drink their water by measure. And I heard a great voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, A measure of wheat which shall only be daily food for one man, shall now be sold for a denarius, or Roman penny, which is the price of his daily labour; and three measures of barley only shall be sold for a denarius, or Roman penny. And yet, that there may not be a total scarcity, see that thou who appearest as the executioner of this judgment, injure not the oil, nor the wine, let the olive-trees, and the vines, remain unblasted; to shew, that God in judgment remembers mercy.

tered, upon the opening of some of the seals, especially the seventh. The ingenious author above-mentioned, interprets this seal, of the judgments of God upon the Jewish persecutors, under Trajan and Hadrian, A. D. 100, to A. D. 138, when the Jews had 1000 cities and fortresses taken and destroyed, and 580,000 men slain.

\* *A measure of wheat for a penny.* This may seem, to an English reader, a description of great plenty; but, it certainly intends the contrary, as I have intimated in the paraphrase. The penny was about seven pence halfpenny of our money; and it appears from Tacitus, as well as from Mark ix. 2, (See Fam. Expos. in loc.) to have been the daily wages of a labourer. It also appears from other ancient writers, particularly Herodotus, (see Raphelius in loc.) and from

Hippocrates, Diogenes, Laertius, and Athenæus, (see Grotius in loc.) that this measure, or *chanix*, was no more than was allowed to a slave for his daily food. What would become of families, when a man could gain by his labour no more, and that only of bread, than might suffice for his own subsistence?—Mr. Lowman interprets this third seal of the scarcity, in the time of the Antonines, from A. D. 138, to A. D. 193. and produces passages from Tertullian, and the Roman historians, concerning the calamity the empire endured by scarcity in this period. [See that thou injure not, &c.] The introduction of so many allegorical persons, as famine, and death, and the state of separate spirits in this vision, confirms what was said above in note d, as to the nature of the things that appeared.

rebr.  
x.  
Rev.  
vi. 7.

And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying to me, Come, and see a farther discovery of the Divine will. And I saw, and behold a pale horse

appeared; and as for him that sat on him, his name was called Death. He appeared like a person entirely emaciated, and hell followed him; he seemed to be attended with a person who was a proper emblematical representation of the state of separate spirits, and there was given unto him power to slay great numbers, as it were, the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with thirst, and with death, that most dreadful kind of death, and with the wild beasts of the field.

9 And when he opened the fifth seal, a very memorable scene represented itself to me; for then I saw under the altar, which made a part of the view before me, a visible representation of the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God, and the testimony to the truth of the gospel which they courageously retained, in the midst of all opposition. And they cried with a loud voice, as making an appeal to the injured justice of the Divine Being, and said, How long, O thou supreme and sovereign Lord of the universe, who art ever armed with almighty power and terror against all thine implacable enemies: how long, O thou holy and true God, shalt it be, ere thou dost judge and avenge our blood upon those who dwell upon the earth, who have, without remorse, poured it

11 out as water. And, upon this, they appeared to be called up from the place where they lay as so many bleeding victims; and there were given unto each of them white robes, in token of

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come, and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of

[Fourth seal.] Mr. Lowman interprets this of the seal of the pestilence, and other calamities, in the reigns of Maximian and Valerian, from A. D. 193, to A. D. 270. This he supports by proper authorities from several Christian and heathen writers in that period, who particularly mention one pestilence, that lasted fifteen years.

h Ere thou dost avenge our blood. We are not to understand this as the language of personal revenge, but of zeal for the honour of God, which was so intimately concerned in the punishment to be in-

flicted upon the blood-thirsty persecutors.

White robes. Mr. Fleming understands this, as an intimation of their preferment to some new post of honour and service. But, I suppose, this was only a representation, that though their blood did cry for vengeance in the ears of God, yet that vengeance should be delayed; nevertheless, that, in the mean time, they should be exalted to a glorious state. The argument he draws from this passage, in proof of a first resurrection, seems too precarious to be repeated. Flem. first Res. p. 46, 47.

## On opening the sixth seal, a great earthquake.

them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. the triumph they had gained over death, and all its terrors; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little while, though their blood remained unavenged, till the number of their fellow-servants and brethren, who should be killed as they [had been] for the testimony of a good conscience, and the preaching of the gospel, should be fulfilled,\* according to the intention of Divine Providence, in letting their persecutors go on a while, till they had met in the measure of their iniquity!

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became red as blood: And it seemed as if the stars fell from heaven upon the earth; numbers of them at once, as fast as when a fig-tree droppeth its untimely figs, being shaken by the force of a mighty wind. And the heavens passed away, like the clouds rolling one upon another, like a volume of a book when it is rolled up; and every mountain on earth, and every island in the sea, were moved out of their places; so great and general was the shock, to represent the calamities approaching in those terrible wars, which were to precede the revolutions to which this seal referred.<sup>m</sup> And all the inhabitants of the world

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every

\* The number of their brethren who should be killed, &c.] Nothing could tend more to encourage Christians to endure their sufferings with steady patience, than this, that it was appointed of God, that a certain number of martyrs should be put to death, and that the season of their triumph was to succeed.

<sup>1</sup> Fifth seal.] Mr. Lowman interprets this seal, of the severe persecution under Dioclesian, from A. D. 270, to A. D. 304; which was the most extensive and

furious of all; and so many Christians suffered death, that the heathens boasted in an ancient inscription, that they had effaced the name and superstition of the Christians.

<sup>m</sup> Earthquake—sun becoming black—stars falling, &c.] Awful judgments and calamities are often described by such commotions and alterations in the natural world. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 10; and the like.

And all men are thrown into consternation.

ECT. slave, and the free-man, fled as in surprise, and hid themselves as fast as they could, even in the most gloomy caves, and among the rocks of the mountains; horrid as this retreat appeared. And not thinking themselves sufficiently secure there, they said, in wild astonishment and affright, to the mountains, and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, the almighty and terrible God, and from the wrath of the Lamb. 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who can be able to stand against it? Thus it appeared that they would have thought the crush of a mountain less terrible, than the vengeance they expected, and had more hope of moving inanimate nature by their outcries, than of prevailing upon their righteous and inexorable Judge.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

To whatever event these seals may refer, it is certain, that the representations here made are very awful, and very instructive. Let us consider ourselves as invited to come up and see, and let us observe the memorable spectacle with attention. Let the view of the white horse, and his rider, who went forth conquering and to conquer, lead us to reflect on the peaceful purposes of our blessed Saviour's appearance, and the rapidity of his conquests, and engage us frequently to pray for the further prosperity of his kingdom, that kingdom of righteousness, love and happiness. 34, 5 When we think of the terrible effects of war, of famine, and of pestilence, represented by the three following horses, and their riders here mentioned, let it excite our thankfulness, that not one of this dreadful triumvirate is sent forth against us, though

\* Day of his wrath is come | As it appears, by comparing one part of this book with another, that the last seal made way for, and introduced the trumpets, and the last trumpet the vials, it is justly argued, that there is a reference to a series of events, successively following each other, and consequently, this passage cannot refer to the final judgment, but to some great and spreading calamity, in which the hand of Christ should appear. And this interpretation is illustrated and confirmed, by the manner in which the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold. Mat xxiv Compare Isa 11 19, xiii 6, Hos x 8, Zeph 1 14, Luke xxiii. 30 — Mr Lowman interprets the 6th seal, of the great commotions in the empire, from Maximian to Constantine the Great, who put an end to the persecution of heathen Rome; from A. D 304, to A. D 323, during which time, there were many bloody battles between the contending emperors till Constantine abolished paganism, and established the Christian religion. This interpretation he confirms by apposite passages from Lactantius, and the heathen historians and it appears the most probable.

## Reflections on the opening of the fifth

our national crimes have indeed deserved, that they should invade us with united terrors; that peace should be taken from our land, that our bread and water should be corrupted by weight and measure, and that the dead should lie unburied in our streets, the food of the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth; nor can any thing more justly excite our gratitude and thankfulness, than that the terrors and the work of sanguinary persecution, are not to be found in the midst of us. The history of its horrors and ravages in other nations as a lesson, may sometimes be an exercise of our faith; and we may be exhorted to go out with *the souls under the altar*, *How long O Lord, wilt thou not avenge the blood of thy saints upon the earth?* But let us wait with patience; let us not form a rash and inconsiderate judgment. The dead, who die in the Lord, and those who had been persecuted to death for his sake, and in his cause, are incomparably more happy than those who are the happiest among the living. The white robes, and golden crowns, with which they are adorned, are an abundant compensation, not only for every lighter suffering, but even for the slow fire and the rack, those most dreadful instruments of torture. And though their malicious and implacable enemies may bitterly insult over them for a while, yet the triumphing of the wicked is for a short time, their guilty spirits will soon be summoned before the great Avenger of blood; and the day is coming when they shall be publicly brought forth, to suffer the utmost demands of his justice; even that day, when all the figurative descriptions here used shall be fully answered, in their literal meaning; *when the sun shall indeed be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the volume of heaven shall be rolled up as a scroll, and its stars shall fall from their orbs*. It is no wonder that ungodly sinners fly from this alarming and tremendous scene, with wild consternation and confusion; no wonder, that they rend the very heavens with their cries, and *call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to cover them*: for O, what were the sudden and irresistible crush of a rock, or a mountain, when compared with the weight of the wrath of the Lamb, and with the fire and brimstone of this second death! O, that by the expectation of this awful day, men of all ranks and conditions, may be influenced to make their application to him, while he yet appears in the displays of his grace and mercy! to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, even when his wrath is only beginning to be kindled (Psaln ii. 12.)

## S E C T.

*The increase of the Christian church, which was to succeed the opening of the seals, is represented by the vision of twelve thousand sealed out of each tribe of Israel; and then follows a view of the glory and happiness of those who should courageously endure persecution while it continued. Rev. VII. throughout.*

S E C T.

Rev.  
VII. 1.

**AND** after these things, I saw, and I heard, *pleased God to give me a revelation of the increase which his church should receive after the commotions which had been shadowed out by those visions which were introduced by the opening the seals. Accordingly, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth; that is, the north, the south, the east, and the west; and they appeared as holding the four cardinal winds of the earth in their hands, that the wind might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree; but that there might be the most entire and complete calm, to represent the peaceful state of things, which should succeed the tumultuous and distressing revolutions which had been intimated to me above. (Compare Jer.*

*2 xlix. 36, 37.) And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, to intimate the progress the gospel should make from the east to the west; having in his hand the seal of the living God, in order to impress a mark upon those whom he was graciously determined to distinguish as his own property, and who should be inclined to dedicate themselves to his service. And he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom power was given over the winds, at present to restrain them, but afterwards to loose them with great violence, and by them to injure, in a terrible manner, the earth, and the sea; Saying, Injure not, by the missive vengeance committed to you, the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, untill we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads; that distinguishing them by that seal, you may know how to moderate the force of the storm where their safety*

*and comfort is concerned. And I then heard*

Rev. VII. 1.

**AND** after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea:

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the

number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel. *the number of those that were sealed, in all, one hundred and forty-four thousand, who were sealed in an equal number, out of every tribe of the children of Israel. And I heard them mentioned in the following order: of the tribe of*

5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. *Judah, as the most noble and glorious, distinguished by its regal dignity, and its peculiar relation to Christ according to the flesh, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Reuben, though that were so much degraded by Jacob, and comparatively so small, when the people were in the wilderness, [were] sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad, whose territories in Canaan lay contiguous to those of Reuben on the other side Jordan, [were] also sealed twelve thousand.*

6 Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasse were sealed twelve thousand. *And, from thence, the angel appeared to pass over to the north-west boundary of the land, and to the shore of the Mediterranean sea, which was the lot of the tribe of Asher, of which there [were] also sealed twelve thousand. And of the neighbouring tribe of Naphtali, whose inheritance lay east of the former, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Manasse, whose land lay next to the east of Naphtali, [were] sealed the same number, that is, twelve thousand. And of the tribe of Simeon, though it had its inheritance taken out of that of Judah, and so might seem less considerable, there [were] sealed as many as of the former, even twelve thousand. And of the tribe of his brother Levi, though his posterity were scattered among the other tribes, and had no land that was properly their inheritance, [were] sealed twelve thousand likewise. And of the tribe of Issachar, to which the angel then passed, [were] sealed twelve thousand. And of the tribe of*

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. *And of the tribe of*

<sup>a</sup> Of the tribe of Judah, &c. I freely acknowledge, that it is very difficult to me to assign the reason of that order in which the tribes are placed, or the reason why one of the tribes is omitted; the latter of which appears much more important than the former. However this is plain, that when Levi was mentioned for one tribe it was necessary, that, since twelve only were to be mentioned, one should be omitted. Some indeed have imagined, that Dan was omitted, to ex-

press how detestable idolatry is in the sight of God; as the tribe of Dan was the first that fell into idolatry after their settlement in Canaan. Compare Judges xviii. 30, 31. Dr. Hammond assigns another reason, namely, that long before that time, the tribe of Dan was destroyed, or brought very low, say the Jews; and indeed it is not numbered among the rest of the tribes, 1 Chron. ii. and following chapters. See Ham. in loc.



SECT. *Sebulun, which lay contiguous to that of Issa-*  
*char to the north, [were] also sealed twelve*  
*thousand. And of the tribe of Ephraim, the*  
*other son of Joseph, and by far the most consi-*  
*derable of his descendants, [were] sealed twelve*  
*thousand too, he not being in that respect at all*  
*distinguished from Manasseh his brother. And*  
*to conclude, of the tribe of Benjamin, Jacob's*  
*youngest son, [were] sealed twelve thousand.*  
*And thus upon the whole; the number of one*  
*hundred and forty-four thousand was complet-*  
*ed. Nor did I presume to inquire why Dan*  
*was not introduced among his brethren, on this*

Rev.  
VII. 8.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 occasion. Thus did God represent to me, the extraordinary growth of the Christian church, which seemed to be matter of inexpressible joy to the inhabitants of the heavenly world. For after this, I saw, and beheld a great multitude, who made a thronged assembly, which no one could number: <sup>b</sup> and appeared to have come out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and language; the blessed fruit of preaching the gospel over all the world; and they then appeared to me, as standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in long white robes, and having branches of palms in their hands, to signify the victory they should gain over all their enemies, and the state of holiness and joy to which they should be finally conducted, notwithstanding all the formidable opposition through which they should be called to pass.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And I heard them crying with a loud voice, in token of the intenseness of their devotion; and saying, Let all the glory of this great salvation which we have obtained, be ascribed to our God who sits upon the throne, and from thence has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon

<sup>b</sup> Multitude whom no one could number, &c.] Some have supposed that the hundred and forty-four thousand were Jews, and that these were the Gentile church. But it appears to me, that the sealing these thousands, expresses the progress of the gospel under Constantine; and that the innumerable multitude here spoken of, were the spirits of good men departed out of this world, and now with God in glory: and especially those who had weathered

the difficulties and persecutions, during the first centuries of Christianity, when the civil power was generally active against it; and when, I think it highly probable, that many persecutions might have raged in various parts of the world, whose histories are not come down to us. And perhaps the holding the winds, which is mentioned ver. 18 may denote the peace in Constantine's time.

the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were; and let it be also ascribed to the grace and blood of the Lamb, who gave himself to be slain

for our redemption. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and encompassed also, at the same time, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, and, in token of the humblest reverence, they fell down on their faces before the throne, and worshipped God. Saying,

Amen: thus let it be, let the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the strength, [be] ascribed to our God for ever and ever, amen:

may all creatures for ever bless, and give thanks to him, as originally and essentially possessed of supreme glory, complete wisdom, of irresistible and almighty power, and therefore worthy of all honour, though exalted above all praise. We acknowledge him to be so, we rejoice that he is so, and wish that universal nature may join with us in so reasonable, and so delightful a homage, and pronounce the solemn amen. And

one of the elders answered, saying to me, As for those who are clothed with white raiment, and make such a splendid appearance, who are they, and whence do they come? And I, supposing

by this question that he asked in order to quicken my attention to what he had to tell me concerning them, said to him, Sir, I conclude thou knowest, though I do not. And he said to me, It is true; and I would have thee observe, for thine own encouragement, and that of thy brethren, and those who may arise after thee, that these are they who are come out of much tribulation, which they have endured in the cause of true religion; and they have washed their robes, and made them so white as you see them in the blood of the Lamb: they owe all their exaltation and glory, not to the blood they have

sect.  
x.  
Rev.  
vii.

° Made them white in the blood of the Lamb.] It looks too much like an obstinate resolution by no means to acknowledge the efficacy of Christ's blood to our salvation, for any to maintain, that the blood of the Lamb here signifies blood shed for his sake, when it is said in words so much resembling these, chap. i. 5, who

loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And chap. v. 9, thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. The texts produced to palliate the other forced and unnatural interpretation, when consulted, will appear little to the purpose. They are chiefly Col. i. 24. and Heb. xi. 26.

- SECT. themselves offered, but to that most precious  
 x. blood of his, which he permitted to be shed for  
 their sakes. *Therefore*, being thus redeemed  
 Rev. to God by him, and having been enabled to  
 VII. 15. approve their fidelity to their Divine Master, in  
 the midst of the greatest extremities, they now  
 receive a rich equivalent for all they have suf-  
 fered; for *they are before the throne of God, and*  
*they perform Divine service to him day and night*  
*in his temple; and he who sitteth upon the throne,*  
*itches his tabernacle, as it were, upon them,*  
 and displays the tokens of his presence all  
 16 around them. *They shall hunger no more, nei-*  
*ther shall they thirst any more, for ever; nor*  
*shall the scorching rays of the sun fall upon*  
*them; nor any other inconvenient and disagree-*  
 17 *able heat; For the Lamb, who is in the midst*  
*of the throne, shall himself, as it were, own the*  
*relation of a Shepherd to them, and take care*  
*to feed them, and he shall lead them to fountains*  
*of living water; and that God whom they have*  
*faithfully served, and whose interest has been*  
*so dear to them, shall act, as it were, the part*  
*of an indulgent Father, and tenderly wipe away*  
*every tear from their eyes; comforting them*  
*with the most reviving consolations, after all the*  
*calamities and distresses he has permitted them*  
*to endure below.*
- 15 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*
- 16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*
- 17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

## IMPROVEMENT.

- Verse HOW inexpressibly happy are the thousands of those who are  
 4—8 sealed, those whom God has marked out for his own, and in that  
 character has taken them under his special protection. What-  
 ever storms and tempests may arise, they are in no danger of be-  
 ing forsaken; they shall be preserved inviolably safe, and their  
 happiness is secure. They shall be brought at length to join  
 9 with the innumerable multitude, who surround the throne, and  
 ascribe, as all Israel must do, salvation to God who sitteth on the  
 throne, and to the Lamb. And O! that the salvation of Israel  
 were come out of Sion, that their praises might sound sweeter  
 here on earth, and that myriads of new voices might unite in the  
 12 harmonious concert. Those songs of heaven let us begin below,  
 and say, *Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiv-*  
 10 *ing, and honour, and power, and might, be to our God for ever*  
*and ever; amen!* If through his grace, we can call him our God,  
 how cordially should we join in this sublime ascription!

## The vision of the seven angels with trumpets

In the mean time, we may see the church in affliction; we may feel a large share of personal, or public tribulation; but, when it presses hardest upon us, let us lift up our eyes to that glorious scene which the apostle beheld, and which was so excellent and sublime, that it might well transport him, even under the tribulations through which he was then making his way to it. Let us persevere, steadily and faithfully, as they did; and the day will come, when our robes shall be as white, and our crowns as radiant, and our palms as verdant as theirs. Let us then bear with patience, *hunger and thirst, heat and weariness*, while we travail through this vale of tears; *rejoicing in hope* of the everlasting refreshment and pleasure to which the Lamb will lead us; even those *fountains of living water*, of which he will give us to drink, when God has wiped away all tears from our eyes, and placed us before his throne, where we shall serve him day and night in his temple, and see his face, and dwell with him, and have him for ever dwell with us, and in us. Amen.

### S E C T. XI.

*On the opening the seventh seal, the seven angels appear with their trumpets, and the four first of them sound. Rev. VIII. throughout.*

REV. VIII. 1.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

REVELATION VIII. 1.

THUS I have given an account of the manner in which the Lamb proceeded in opening six of the seals, and of the effects produced by them; and I am now to add, that when he had opened the seventh seal, there was a profound silence in heaven<sup>a</sup> for about the space of half an hour; to awaken, by that means, a more earnest attention to the extraordinary things that were to appear in consequence of the opening that seal. And I saw the seven angels<sup>b</sup> which I 2

SECT. XI.

Rev. VIII. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Silence in heaven.] Some are of opinion, here is an allusion to the silence which used sometimes to be kept in the worship of God in the temple, while the people were praying, Luke i. 10.—I think with Mr. Lowman, that the seventh seal was only introductory to the trumpets, and the seventh trumpet to the vials.

<sup>b</sup> The seven angels which stood, &c.] The manner in which this is expressed in the Greek, τὰς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους ἰδόντες, is very emphatical: it seems to signify

the seven angels, who had before been mentioned as standing before the throne; and this form of speaking so plainly refers to what had been said before, that it does a great deal towards proving, that the seven Spirits of God, mentioned chap. v. 6, as the eyes and horns of the Lamb, are the same with these angels mentioned in the note on Rev. iv. 5, though, as I have there intimated, it is not absolutely certain.

SECT. have before mentioned, and *which then stood* seven angels which  
 XI. *before the throne of God, and seven trumpets* stood before God;  
 Rev. *were given to them, that they might each of them* and to them were  
 VIII. 2 *successively sound an alarm; which I understood* given seven trum-  
 to be the symbol of some very important and pets.

to succeed those which had been expressed by  
 3 the seals. *And while they were preparing to*  
*execute the orders they had received, another*  
*angel, whom I understood as a typical repre-*  
*sentation of the great High Priest of the church,*  
*came and stood before the altar which I saw in*  
*this celestial temple, having a golden censer, and*  
*there was given to him much fragrant incense,*  
*consisting of a variety of excellent perfumes*  
*mingled together, that he might present [it]*  
*with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden*  
*altar which was before the throne;*<sup>c</sup> just as the  
 Jewish high priest used to burn incense on the  
 golden altar in the temple, while the people  
 were praying in the courts of it, at the hour of  
 4 morning and evening sacrifice. *And the smoke*  
*of the perfumes went up in a thick and odorifer-*  
*ous cloud, together with the prayers of the*  
*saints, from the hand of the angel as he stood*  
*before God; and seemed thereby emblematically*  
*to signify, how grateful to the Divine Being*  
*those prayers were, which proceeded from holy*

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand

<sup>c</sup> *With the prayers of all the saints.* Some have thought, that this is a plain intimation of the doctrine of the *intercession of the angels*, which is urged to have been an erroneous Jewish notion; and those who imagine it to be taught here, have made it an argument, against the *inspiration of this book*. But I rather agree with those interpreters, who consider *this angel* as an emblem of Christ. If we were indeed to consider Christ as appearing in the shape of a *lamb*, this would be a difficulty; but it does not appear at all absurd to me, that while the efficacy of Christ's atonement was represented by a *lamb slain*, his intercession consequent upon it, should be represented by an *angel offering the incense*; which seems only a *symbolical, or hieroglyphical* declaration of this truth, that the prayers of the saints on earth, are rendered acceptable to God, by the intercession of one in heaven, who appears as a

priest before God; just as the *vision of the lamb* represents to us, that a Person of perfect innocence, and of a most gentle and amiable disposition, eminently adorned and enriched with the Spirit of God, has been offered as a sacrifice; and is, in consequence of that, highly honoured on the throne of God. But who this important Victim, and this Intercessor is, we are to learn elsewhere; and we do learn, that both these offices met in one, and that this illustrious Person is *Jesus the Son of God*.—As the golden altar made a part of the scene, there was a propriety in its appearing to be used, and the time of praying was the hour of incense. This vision may probably be designed to intimate, that considering the scenes of confusion represented by the trumpets, the saints should be exceeding earnest with God, to pour out a spirit of wisdom, piety, and zeal, upon the church, and preserve it safe amidst these confusions.

who cast fire upon the earth, and it thundered, &c.

42

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thundings, and earthquakes.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound,

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and

hearts, being recommended by the intercession of that great High Priest, whom this glorious angel had the honour, upon this occasion, to represent, as Aaron and his sons did in the Jewish tabernacle of old. And when the angel had performed this office, in order to shew the awful manner in which God would avenge the injury which his praying people upon earth received from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he took the censer, and advancing towards the brazen altar of burnt-offerings, he filled it with fire of the altar, and threw it upon the earth, and as soon as ever this action was performed, there were long and terrible voices, and thunders, and lightnings, which seemed to break out from the Shechinah, the glorious token of the Divine presence, and there was also the sudden and violent shock of an earthquake, which seemed to shake the foundation of the world. And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, stood out in order, and prepared themselves, that they might sound, as every one should receive the appointed signal; which hereupon was given to each in his order.

And the first angel sounded his trumpet, and there was a violent storm of hail and fire, and the shower was also mingled with blood, and it was cast down upon the earth, greatly to the

<sup>a</sup> With fire of the altar.] There was no fire upon the golden altar, but that which was in the censer, in which the incense was burnt, so that we must necessarily, by this fire of the altar, understand that of the brazen altar, though it is not expressly declared to be so, and this very intimate that in some other places the same words may, by comparing different circumstances, have different ideas annexed to them.

<sup>c</sup> Voices and thunders.] If the latter word be intended to explain the former, it might be rendered, voices, even thunders. But, if different ideas are to be annexed to the word, I must confess, that I know not what they are. Yet we may imagine some distinct articulate sounds different from thunder, to be mixed with it, like that which some of those present heard, John xii 29 (Compare Isa xlviii 6) This representation may be intended to intimate, in general, the confusion and

calamities with which the period, expressed by the successive trumpets, should be filled, and the regard God would shew to his praying people during its continuance.

<sup>d</sup> Hail and fire mingled with blood.] Grotius explains this of the hardness of heart, and bloody rage of the Jews, Mr Mede, of the invasion of the northern nations upon the Romans, and Mr Clark, of the Arian heresy and persecution, whereby many professors of Christianity were infected, and many destroyed. See his Annotations in loc. But Mr Lowman, more probably, interprets it of the bloody wars in Constantine's family, which with the invasion of the neighbouring nations, almost ruined the whole strength of the Roman empire, fell heavy on its great men, and particularly the family of Constantine, which during this period was quite extinguished, from A. D. 317. to 337.

# The second and third angel sound.

detrimēt of its productions, and particularly, the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up  
 21. it seemed to me, that a third part of the trees were burnt up, and all the green grass of the field was also burnt and scorched up (Compare Exod ix. 23)

8 And the second angel sounded, and it was as if a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and it produced so great an alteration in the colour of the waters, that it seemed as if a third part of the sea became blood, which I easily apprehended to signify the slaughter which should come upon many people by means of some victorious Prince, and those who

9 fought under his banner. And, as a further token of it, a third part of the creatures which had animal life in the sea died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed thereby, and the persons sailing in them all perished. (Compare Jer li 25)

10 And the third angel sounded, and to represent some great destroyer that was to appear, and become very conspicuous, both for the mischief he should occasion, and the ruin in which he should be involved, there fell from heaven a great star, burning like a torch, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters, to signify the influence which the Person represented by it should have upon human affairs, and upon those things which were the springs of comfort and support to mankind. And, in reference to the effect it was to produce, the name of the star is called WORMWOOD and a

6 Mountain burning. | Grotius explains this, of the soldiers' rapine upon the people of Jerusalem, and firing the towers, Mr Mede, of the firm, of Rome, Mr Clark, of the spirit of ambition and pride among the clergy, Mr Lowman, of the invasion of Italy by the northern nations, and the taking of Rome by Alaric, general of the Goths, who plundered it and set it on fire, and this calamity was followed by the spoil of the greatest part of Italy, from A D. 379, to A D 412

7 There fell from heaven a great star | Compare Dan viii 10 Grotius interprets it of the Egyptian impost, Acts xxi 38 Mr Mede of the fall of the western empire under Augustus, and Mr Clark,

(cannot in loc) of the corruption of ordinances by an heretical churchman, of great parts and considerable figure, whom he supposes to be Pelagius. Some explain it of Mahomet, whose name signifies illustrious. Mem of Literat Vol V p. 253 But Mr Lowman with greater probability, interprets it of the succeeding ravages in Italy, founding the Gothic kingdom there, and putting an end to the Roman empire, from A D 412, to A D 493. Agreeably to this historians inform us, that several provinces of the empire were dismembered, the city of Rome again taken, and plundered, and Italy became a prey to the barbarous nations.

third part of the waters became worm-wood; but with this additional circumstance, that it was poisonous as well as distasteful; and many men died in consequence of drinking the waters, because they were become bitter. (Compare Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

12 And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them, even of their light, was darkened; and the day did not appear, [with respect to] a third part of its lustre, and the night also; but there was as great a deficiency in the usual light of both, as when either the sun by day, or the moon by night, is so eclipsed, that a third part of the body of each is shaded; which I understood to imply, that God would, in the course of his providence, draw a veil over the whole face of things, and obscure the glory of the state to which this vision referred.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound! Prepare therefore for the manifestation of these awful scenes.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we prepare ourselves with silent admiration, to attend the discoveries here opening upon us, let us rejoice in the symbolical representation of the intercession of Jesus, our great High Priest, shadowed forth, in so beautiful and expressive a manner, by the angel standing at the altar with the golden censer, and much incense. Behold, how the prayers of all the saints ascend before God with acceptance! See the method we

[Darkened.] Compare Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Grotius interprets this of taking the south Galilean towns; Mr. Mede of the destruction of the light of Rome, when deprived of regal and consular majesty. And Mr. Clarke (see his Annot. in loc.) of eclipsing the light of the church by tradition and human inventions. Mr. Fowman interprets it of the wars in

Italy, between the Goths and Justinian's generals, whereby the exarchate of Ravenna was erected, all remaining power and authority at Rome, suppressed, and the imperial city became subject to Ravenna, where the exarch, or lieutenant of the eastern emperor resided; from A. D. 493, to A. D. 568.



SECT. XI. are to take, if we desire that our's should be acceptable to him; and, encouraged by such a view, let us offer them up, not only with humility, but with cheerful confidence, though we are conscious of their great unworthiness.

To what wretchedness are they exposed, who oppress and injure those, that, through their great Representative, have such an interest in the court of heaven. *The hail and the fire, shall, at the Divine command, powerfully plead their cause; the mountains shall be torn from their basis, and cast into the midst of the sea; the sun, the moon, and the stars shall be darkened in their orbs, and all nature be thrown into convulsive agonies, ere God will suffer them finally to be over-borne, or fail to punish, with becoming severity, those who continue to persecute, or evil-treat them.*

Let such awful representations as these, remind us of the sovereign almighty power of God, whom all the hosts of heaven worship with reverence; and at whose awful word, when he gives forth his voice, *hailstones and coals of fire descend*, (Psal. xviii. 13;) *at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the foundations of the earth are shaken; who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not, who darkeneth the moon, and sealeth up the stars* Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations, so terrible in the judgments which thou executest on the earth? Deliver us, we intreat thee, from the multiplied and accumulated miseries of those who continue obstinately to oppose thee; and conduct us at length to thy heavenly presence, though it should be through days of darkness, and waters of bitterness, and seas of blood. Amen.

## S E C T. XII.

*The effect of the fifth and sixth angels sounding their trumpets, Rev. IX. throughhout.*

### REVELATION IX. 1.

SECT.

XII.

Rev  
IX 1

AND the fifth angel sounded; and I saw an angel of distinguished lustre, descending with such amazing velocity, that he seemed like a shooting star, (compare Job xxxviii. 7;) and when he was fallen, as it were, from heaven to the earth, and appeared standing upon it, there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and it diffused itself all

REV. IX 1.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and

*and locusts come out of the bottomless pit :*

the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth. and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five

abroad; so that *the sun, and the whole body of the air, were darkened by the smoke* and gloomy exhalations of the pit; which I understood as intimating some terrible calamity approaching.

And I saw a very shocking appearance; for out of the smoke there came locusts upon the earth,\*

and a destructive power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power, that they should be as pernicious to the inhabitant of the earth, as those terrible animals, and should injure men by their stings as well as by their teeth.

And there was this farther remarkable circumstance, that whereas locusts bring along with them such general destruction to all vegetables, it was said to them, whom I saw on this occasion, that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only<sup>b</sup> some human creatures; and this, under a particular limitation to the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; from whence I inferred that this destructive visitation should especially affect those, who, whatever they might profess, were destitute of true vital religion.

And to signify the lingering vexation; which these destroyers should occasion to the inhabitants of the countries they were to ravage, I was further informed, that it was given to them, that they should not kill them outright, but that they should be tormented five months: which might be intended to express a calamity, that should

\* Locusts upon the earth ] Many protestant writers imagine these locusts to signify the religious orders of monks and friars, &c. The learned Grotius understands by them, the sect of the zealots, which appeared among the Jews during the siege, and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr Mede, the inundation of the Saracens, and indeed, with considerable circumstances of resemblance. The ingenious Mr Lowman confirms this interpretation, and shows, that the rise and progress of the Mahometan religion and empire, checked by internal divisions, is a remarkable accomplishment of this part of the prophecy; which is further illustrated, by the ignorance and error the Mahometans every where spread, their great number and hardness, their habits, customs, and manners,

namely, twisting their hair, wearing beards, their care of their horses, invading their neighbours in summer, like locusts, sparing the trees and fruits of the countries they invaded, &c. The captivity of the men, and the miserable condition of the women, exposed to persons who gave an almost unbounded liberty to their lusts, which was enough to make them even to desire death, &c. All these circumstances are suitable to the character of the Arabians, the history of this period, and to the particulars of the prophecy.—The period extends from A. D. 568, to A. D. 673.

<sup>b</sup> Only the men who had not ] The use of the particles *only*, here, is very remarkable; and it is apparently necessary it should be rendered *only*, rather than *except*

ECT. endure about an hundred and fifty years. *And* months: and their  
 XII. *their torment*, that is, that which they occasioned by their attack, [was] extremely violent, torment was as the  
 Rev. like that of a scorpion when it strikes a man. torment of a scorpion  
 IX. 5. when he striketh a man.

6 *And in these dreadful days, to which this vision refers, men shall seek death, in a wild kind of despair, and shall not find it, and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee away from them, and leave them to mourn over a life of wretchedness, all the comforts and enjoyments of which shall be utterly swallowed up in their sufferings.* 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 *And these creatures were not exactly of the form of locusts; but though they bore some resemblance to them, in many instances, they differed from them in others, and were to be considered as a kind of hieroglyphical representation of creatures which are very mischievous and terrible; and I particularly observed, that the likeness of the locusts [was] like horses prepared for war, (compare Joel ii. 4,) especially the form of their heads; and whereas common locusts have some brilliant ornaments on their heads, and various parts of their bodies, I observed, with regard to these, that on their heads [were] as it were, crowns like gold; and their faces were like the faces of men, which two circumstances gave me to understand, that they were intended as an emblem of mighty and powerful men, who were to reign over various provinces and kingdoms.* 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their head were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

8 *And they had on their heads long tresses of hair, like the tresses of women; whereas common locusts have only a down upon their breasts. And whereas other animals of that name have large strong teeth, their teeth were like [the teeth] of lions, sharp and pointed, as well as large and strong. And instead of the fine down on the breasts of common locusts, they had breast-plates like breast-plates of iron; and whereas common locusts* 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

<sup>c</sup> Shall seek death, &c.] As such great numbers were, in fact, slain by these locusts, (if they signify, as is generally supposed, the Saracens,) this expression must only be understood of many survivors, who, by the calamities they inflicted, should be made weary of their lives. See note <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> A kind of hieroglyphical representation.] As there are no animals in nature answerable to those which are here described, I take it for granted, that as the four animals mentioned above are hieroglyphics of angels, so are these of mischievous creatures. Compare chap. iv. 7, note <sup>f</sup>.

## The sixth angel sounds:

iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. *make a terrible noise with their wings; the noise which these strange and symbolical locusts made by the motion of their wings [was] like the noise of chariots, [and] many horses rushing to war;*

so that they seemed to tear the ground with their rage and fury, and to shake the air with their neighings. *And instead of being formed at the lower end of their bodies, as other locusts are, which have no stings, but are quite inoffensive and innocent animals, these creatures had tails like scorpions; and their stings were in their tails; and their power, as I observed above, [was] given them to hurt the earth, and men its inhabitants, for about five months, or about an hundred and fifty years.*

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months. *And they had a king over them, wherein they further differed from the locust kind, (Prov. xxx. 27.) who is the angel of the bottomless pit, and the great head of those apostate spirits who dwell there; whose name is in the Hebrew language, Abaddon; and in the Greek, he has the name of Apollyon: both the one, and the other, expressing his destructive nature, and the dreadful havock he makes, wherever his attempts are successful.*

11 And they had a king over them, wherein they further differed from the locust kind, (Prov. xxx. 27.) who is the angel of the bottomless pit, and the great head of those apostate spirits who dwell there; whose name is in the Hebrew language, Abaddon; and in the Greek, he has the name of Apollyon: both the one, and the other, expressing his destructive nature, and the dreadful havock he makes, wherever his attempts are successful. *And thus, one woe is gone: [and] behold, yet 12 other two woes besides it, coming, threatening yet more terrible calamities than these.*

12 One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter. *And upon this the sixth angel sounded; and I 13 did not see any immediate appearance in consequence of it; but I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which was before God, (which seemed therefore to come from the most holy place which was directly behind it,) saying to the sixth angel, who still had the trumpet which he had sounded in his hand, Loosen now the four angels, which are bound by the great*

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, (which seemed therefore to come from the most holy place which was directly behind it,) saying to the sixth angel, who still had the trumpet which he had sounded in his hand, Loosen now the four angels, which are bound by the great

\* *Abaddon.*] When the etymology is so evident, and so particularly explained by the author, I cannot but wonder at Dr. More's endeavour to explain it another way, as referring to the profession which the Mahometans should make of maintaining the doctrine of the Unity. See More's Theol. Works, p. 130.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the

† *The four angels which are bound.*] Grotius refers this to the Roman army under four commanders, which came from the borders of this river. Mr. Mede,

to the four *beglerbegs* of the Turks; and he interprets, ver. 17, of *guns* invented about that time, and used by them in their successful war upon the Europeans. See the passage at large in More's Theol. Works, p. 130, 131. They, who refer this passage to the rise of the Turkish Ottoman empire, suppose that the four angels mean either four provinces, or four cities near Euphrates, from whence considerable leaders arose, who pushed on, and advanced the Turkish conquests: and Mr. Pyle,

150 and a vast army of horsemen issue forth to destroy them :

ECT. river *Euphrates* ; who were intended to represent some potentates arising from that part of the world, who, in the period referred to, should become very famous throughout the earth,

15 for their exploits and achievements. And the four angels were loosened, who were prepared for a certain period of time, signified, according to the prophetic reckoning, by *an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year* ;<sup>s</sup> that they might make a great slaughter among the inhabitants of the earth ; or, as it was expressed to me in the vision, according to the language used before, might *kill a third part of the men*, who after the preceding plagues continued upon it.

16 They accordingly appeared, as leading on a mighty army ; and the number of the horsemen they led on, was immensely great, represented to me by *two myriads of myriads*, that is, no less than two hundred millions. And I heard the number of them thus mentioned to me, as it was

17 impossible for me to count them. And I saw the horses, and those that sat upon them thus, in [their] appearance ; that is, having breast-plates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone, which seemed to send forth blue, burning flames, which went devouring before them ; and the

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared, for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand and I heard the number of them.

and others, have endeavoured to confirm this interpretation. But, as the Turkish empire did not commence till the 13th century, this event seems to be too late in the successive orders of periods, and correspondent events. Mr. Lowman's interpretation seems to me much more probable, which refers it to the re-union of the divided Saracen power, their invading and ravaging Europe, till they were defeated by Charles Martel, and agreeable to ver. 20, 21, the sufferers were so far from repenting, that *image worship* was confirmed by order of the Pope, and the authority of councils in the east and west. This period reaches from A. D. 675, to A. D. 750.

[Of an hour, and a day, &c.] Dr. Lloyd, bishop of Worcester, in his interpretation of this passage, foretold, many years before it happened, that peace would be concluded with the Turks in the year 1698, which accordingly came to pass ; and that they should no more renew their wars against the popish Christians. His argument was, that the angels *would* were

the commanders of the many Turkish squadrons who had been before subject to the Sultan of Babylon. And as for the time here mentioned, he endeavours to shew it to be, in the prophetic style, 396 years ; and computing from their conquest at Prouse, in 1302, by adding 396, the number will be 1698. See Bishop Burnet's History of his Times, Vol. I. p. 204. But how lucky soever the conjecture was, it does not convince me, that it is the true interpretation, and so much the less, as it seems evident to me, the year spoken of in this book consists only of 360 days. Besides, the Turks have renewed their war on the Popish Christians, particularly on the Emperor, and the republic of Venice, in 1716, and since. As for the phrases, *an hour, a day, &c.* I do not understand them ; they may, perhaps, only signify a determined, limited time, as such expressions in scripture frequently do ; though they would seem most naturally, and agreeable to the prophetic reckoning, to denote about 301 years.

*Yet those who were spared, repented not.*

heads of the horses [were] like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths went fire and smoke, and brimstone, to represent the courage and fierceness of these armies, and the irresistible destruction they should make wherever they marched. And with the united force of these

15 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which is said out of their mouths

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and hid heads, and with them they do hurt

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts

<sup>b</sup> Not a rhip demons } This demon-worship Mr. Mede has taken great pains to prove, to be the worship of dead men, which is so common in the church of Rome. As for their worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone, the fact is evident, as that the heathens themselves ever practised such idolatrous worship.

<sup>c</sup> Sorceries } By paganism, Dr. Clarke understands all the superstitious methods of making men fancy themselves to be religious by what others can do for, or to them, or what they can do for themselves, without the practice of true righteousness and virtue. Clarke's xviii Sermon, p. 168. But others understand it by the arts of poisoning.

sect. nor their fornication, nor their thefts and rob-  
 xii. beries, by which they had so notoriously injured  
 all about them, and bid defiance to every law,  
 Rev. but that of their own unruly appetites and pas-  
 12. 21. sions, to which they were held in the basest  
 subjection.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

It is exceeding natural to reflect, while reading this representation, how exactly the mightiest princes, and most savage  
 Ver. 4. destroyers of mankind, execute the plan of Divine Providence, and fulfil the decrees of God; even while they are intending nothing but the gratification of their own ambition, and avarice, and cruelty. The angel of God holds the keys of the bottomless  
 3 pit; and is by Divine permission, that these voracious locusts issue forth and infest the earth. The ministers of God's pleasure, bind the messengers of destruction, and loosen them at the  
 15 Divine command. And the season, wherein they shall ravage the world, is here limited to a year, to a day, to an hour.  
 15 ABADDON, APOLLYON, the great and mighty destroyer, cannot effect the least of his mischievous and ruinous purposes, without the permission of the Preserver and Redeemer of mankind; and cannot go beyond his limits. And even the mischief which he does, is intended and over-ruled to subserve the wisest and kindest designs. But O, how grievous is it to think of  
 0, 21 that degree of obstinacy and perverseness which so generally prevails in the world, and which renders men so incorrigible, under the most painful chastisements Satan is permitted to inflict. Send forth, O Lord, the gentle influences of thy Spirit, and melt those hearts, which will not be broken by the weightiest strokes of thy vengeance; and deliver us from a temper, so much resembling that of hell, and so evidently leading down to those dreadful abodes; the temper of those, who are hardened by correction, and in the time of their affliction and misery, increase and multiply their transgressions against thee.

#### SECT. XIII.

*The vision of a mighty angel appearing in great glory, who had in his hand a little book, which St. John was commanded to eat.* Rev. X. throughout.

#### REVELATION X. 1.

A MOST beautiful and wonderful scene now opened itself to my view; for I saw another  
 Rev. X. 1. AND I saw another mighty angel

*A mighty angel descended from heaven, clothed with a cloud.*

came down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and

ance, the marks of unusual strength and vigour; descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud; so that I could not discern the full lustre of his whole body; though variegated with the rays it either reflected or transmitted, it appeared very glorious; and the complete circle of a rainbow [was] about his head, and his face [was] bright as the meridian sun; so that I could not bear to gaze directly upon it. And I had reason to think there was an extraordinary lustre emitted from all the other parts of his body; for even his feet were like pillars of lucid fire. And he had in his hand a little book open, which I afterwards understood to be the volume of the Divine decrees, to be communicated to me. And he put his right foot upon the sea, and the left foot upon the earth, to signify the Divine dominion over both, and the concern of both, in what was further to be transacted. And he cried with a loud, solemn, and awful voice, as a lion roars; and when he had cried, the seven thunders, which I had heard before, uttered their voices again, responsive to his, and to increase the terror of so tremendous a scene. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to have written the contents of what they had uttered; for, loud as their voices were, there was something articulate and intelligible in the sound; and, just in that instant, I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up in secrecy what the seven thunders have spoken, and write them not; for they are, indeed, intended for thy information, but not for that of the public. And the angel which I saw with so many 5 ensigns of distinction, standing with one foot on the sea, and the other on the earth, lifted up his hand towards heaven, with a gesture of solemnity and reverence, as appealing to the great Sovereign of the universe, And swore by the eternal Jehovah, even by him who liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven, and those

\* Angel clothed with a cloud.] The beauties of this noble description are finely illustrated by that most elegant and pious writer, the Rev. Mr. James Hervey, in his Meditations, Vol. I. page 21, 22.

b Lion roars.] The original word, μυαλαί, rather signifies bellows; but that English word has an idea annexed to it, which appeared to me not to suit the dignity of this description.



SECT.

XIII.

Rev.

X. 6.

*things which are in it, and the earth, and the things which are in it, and the sea, and the things which are in it, that time should be no longer:*<sup>c</sup>

that the time of the judgments, to be signified by the pouring out of the seven vials, should not be much longer delayed; and that, when it came, the whole economy of the world should soon draw to a conclusion, and all the periods of time be consummated, that the more important scenes of eternity might open: He sware,

I say, that the delay should not be much longer, but that it should hasten to its end, *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about quickly to sound, and was to introduce the period of the seven vials; and that, consequent on the pouring out of the last vial, the mystery of God,*<sup>d</sup> *as he had revealed its glad tidings to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled, in the utter ruin and destruction of all the enemies of the church,*  
 8 *and in its happy and glorious exaltation.*<sup>e</sup> *And the voice which I before heard from heaven, now spake to me again, and said, Go, and take the little book, which,* as thou perceivest, is

<sup>7</sup> But in the days

of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets

<sup>8</sup> And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is

<sup>c</sup> *That time should be no longer* ] The word *χρῆς* sometimes signifies *delay*, as well as *time*. And, according to the former version, the meaning is, that there should be no *delay* of the destruction of the church's enemies, and of its prosperous and glorious condition. In the latter view, it signifies that the end of time, and the consummation of all things, should soon come. Though the former sense seems to be principally intended, yet I own myself not to be so certain as absolutely to determine it. I think it is evident that some of the *concluding prophecies* of this book refer to the *eternal state*, and therefore I have taken that sentiment into the paraphrase, though not to the exclusion of the former sense: which, as I said, seems to be principally intended, considering the connection, and that the interval between the *pouring out of the seventh vial*, and the consummation of all things, must, at least, be more than a thousand years; and, perhaps, a much more considerable period. Dr. More is of opinion, that the only meaning of this clause is, that the time was elapsed which had been marked out by the period of *three years and an half*. See his Theology Works, p. 122.—Grotius refers the

accomplishment of it to the vengeance to be taken upon the Jews, by Adrian and his successors. Compare SAURIN'S SERM Vol. I. p. 1, 2. Mr. Lowman renders the clause, *the time shall not be yet*: that is, the time of the glorious state of the church shall not be yet; but it shall not be long to it; for *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel*, as it follows, *the mystery of God shall be fulfilled*, &c.

<sup>d</sup> *Mystery of God.*] Dr. Butler, the late worthy Bishop of Durham, understands by this, the *great mystery* of Providence, in suffering vice and confusion to prevail so much in the world. See Butler's Anal. p. 10.

<sup>e</sup> *Should be fulfilled.*] As it is here said, that the mystery of God should be fulfilled, it seems plainly to intimate, that the things yet to be revealed should extend to the end of time; and when it is declared, that this should be fulfilled *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about to sound*, it intimates, that the remainder of time, even to the end of the world, should be comprehended in that period of prophecy, to which the *seventh trumpet*, introductory to the vials, relates.

open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth; for it is intended for thy use and information. (Jer. xv. 16.) And accordingly I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and seemed to myself, to eat it up, and the event exactly answered what he had said to me; for, in my mouth it was sweet as honey, but when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And accordingly, I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and seemed to myself, to eat it up, and the event exactly answered what he had said to me; for, in my mouth it was sweet as honey, but when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said to me, Thou hast not yet dispatched the whole of thy work, in what thou hast already registered, of these visions of the Lord; but thou must again prophesy to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. The oracles thou hast yet to deliver, shall be propagated through many countries, translated into a variety of languages, and perused by persons of various ranks and conditions, and some of them the most eminent and conspicuous; but fear not to deliver them, being assured that He, by whom they are inspired, will take care they shall be punctually fulfilled.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

It other parts of this chapter should seem to be less pregnant with important practical instructions, perhaps the design was that we might be engaged to fix our entire and undivided attention

[ *Again prophesy* ] Mr Mede infers from hence, that the apostle is about to go over the same period of time he had before been discoursing of, giving an account of the state of the church, as he had just done of the state of the empire. But the new descriptions, and new events to which they refer, which are introduced here, and constitute the following chapters, may be sufficient, without any peculiarity of interpretation, to justify the expression. See the preceding note.

SECT.  
XIII.  
Verse 1

tion on the awful words of this illustrious angel, whose appearance is described in colours so exceeding beautiful and striking; with the radiance of the sun streaming from his countenance; the variegated colours of the rainbow encircling his head; of a stature so vast and majestic, that he at once *bestrode the earth and the sea*; with his hand solemnly *lifted up to heaven*; with a voice *awful as thunder*, appealing to the venerable name of God, the Creator of the heavens, of the earth, of the sea, and of all their various inhabitants, in order to add the sanction of an inviolable oath, to a declaration, which in itself from such a Divine messenger, was worthy of absolute and entire credit; a declaration that *time should be no longer*: which is a certain truth, in the most sublime and interesting sense of which the words are capable. Time, as distinguished into days, and weeks, and months, and years, by the revolution of the heavenly luminaries, when the most resplendent of these are extinguished in their orbs, as they quickly will; *when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*; time shall then, I say, be absorbed in an immeasurable eternity. And O, *what an eternity!* An eternity, either of perfect and inconceivable felicity, or hopeless and remediless misery; — But, besides this general construction, there is an important sense in which the proclamation of this celestial herald shall be fulfilled, with regard to individuals; that *time shall be no longer*; the time of Divine patience in waiting upon us; the time in which we shall be continued under the sound of the gospel, and the offers of mercy and the means of salvation; the time in which we shall be conversant with these scenes of mortality, and with the persons who are here most familiar to us, at least in the present circumstances of their being. The period, during which we are to inhabit this earth, and enjoy our spiritual advantages, or our worldly possessions and pleasures, is confined within very narrow limits. The oath of this mighty angel is, perhaps, just ready to be accomplished, and time is closing, and eternity is opening upon us. O that we may consider time and all its concerns, as very shortly to vanish, that our thoughts and our cares may be directed more and more to our own eternal interest, and to that of our fellow creatures. The Judge is even at the door: let us endeavour therefore to be ready, let us improve every transient moment to the purposes for which it was given us; and in these views of the brevity of time, and the importance of preparing for eternity, let us detest all the pleasures and allurements of sin; for they will soon appear like the mysterious morsel of the apostle, bitter as wormwood in the belly though with deceitful and fatal indulgence, we may, for a few moments, have rolled them, like a sweet morsel, under our tongues; vainly desiring to prolong those pleasures, which can serve only to add more keen and exquisite sensibility to our future pain.

# SECT. XIV.

*The vision of the Angel commanding St. John to measure the temple; and declaring that the Gentiles should tread down the outer court; and that the two witnesses should be slain, and raised from the dead and received into heaven; after which, the triumphs of Divine vengeance over their enemies are celebrated.*  
 Rev. XI. 1—18.

REV. XI. 1.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

3 But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

5 And I will give power unto my two

REVELATION XI. 1.

AND when I had eaten the book according to the Divine command, there was given to me, as there was shewn to Ezekiel, whose vision bore so great a resemblance to mine, (Ezek. xl. xliii.) a reed, like a [measuring] rod; and the angel, which had spoken to me before, stood by me, saying, Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the space filled by those who worship at it in the inner-court; And the outer court of the temple, throw out of the account, and measure it not; for there shall be such great disorders introduced, that it shall be given to the Gentiles, and they shall trample, not only upon that, but upon the holy city, for the space of forty-two months; such corruptions shall prevail in the Christian church, though by profession the holy city, and the temple of God, that they who pretend to be its inhabitants, and to worship in it, shall be no better, in the Divine account, than Gentiles. And, in the mean time, I will raise up some to bear an united testimony against these growing corruptions; and I will give to my two witnesses<sup>b</sup> an autho-

SECT. XIV.  
 Rev. XI. 1.

Measure the temple of God, From the proportion between the area of the temple, and the outer-court, supposed to be as one to 3 and 1-half, Mr. Mede, understanding by the temple, the pure and corrupted state of the church, and by the outer-court, its corrupted state, endeavours to prove, that the latter did not entirely commence till the beginning of the fifth century; inferring, also, from hence the authority of the four first general councils. The argument may be seen at large in his Works, p. 388, 389. But it does not seem to require a particular ex-

amination, especially in the face of so many notorious errors, and absurd superstitions, as were evidently introduced into the church long before the time in question. How Grocius should imagine it to signify, that the temple should not be rebuilt by Adrian, though Jerusalem should, is to me very surprising; I doubt not but it signifies the profanation of the church by growing idolatry and superstition, though some few should preserve their purity. [See also witnesses.] Some have strangely supposed these are Enoch and Elijah,

sect.

xiv

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ritative [suppression] and they shall prophesy all this while, that is, during the forty-two months, and two hundred and sixty days, three score days clothed in sackcloth; to denote their afflicted condition.

These are dear and precious to me, as Joshua and Zerubbabel among the Jews of old: and in reference to the emblems under which I represented those my faithful servants (Zech. iv. 3, 11, 14.) I may call these, the two olive-trees, and the two burning and shining lamps, who stand before the God of the whole earth; high in his esteem, and continually in his presence, planted like olive-trees in his house, or kindled like the sacred lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary. And if any one will obstinately injure them, encouraged by the gentleness of their appearance, and the seeming weakness of their present state, he shall find to his cost, that they are under an almighty protection. Their cries to God shall be heard, and such sudden and irresistible vengeance shall follow, that fire shall seem to come out of their mouth<sup>a</sup> and devour their enemies at once; it shall not merely sear and terrify, but utterly destroy them: and I pronounce it again, if any one will injure them, so must he be put to death.

6 These, despised as they are, have power with God; like my servant Elijah of old, (1 Kings xvii. 1,) by their prayers to shut heaven, so

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

4 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have

who are to come to fight against anti-christ. See Limb. Theol. 7. xi. 31. Dr. More understands it of unpolluted priests, and faithful magistrates, appearing for reformation. Others, of the Old and New Testament. But the learned Bishop Lloyd, of the Waldenses and Albigenses. Perhaps it may signify any witnesses for reformation, who should be raised up during this period: illustrated by two, as that concurring number was necessary, according to the law, to make the testimony valid: or to intimate, that the number should be but small. See Mr. Lowman in loc. who proves, there has been a succession of faithful witnesses.

[Clothed in sackcloth.] This was the habit of mourners, and suited to their prophetic character, Isa. xx. 2. This period is the same with that after described as the time of the woman's abode in the wilderness, chap. xii. 6: Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7.

<sup>a</sup> Fire shall come out of their mouth.] I think it highly probable this expression may be figurative, and intended to express the awful vengeance which Christ will take on their enemies in that day when he is revealed in flaming fire, and when the injury received by any of his servants, and especially his faithful witnesses, shall be remembered; and their wrongs fully avenged.

[Shut heaven, &c.] Lord Chief Justice Hale seems to think it is intimated here, that the spirit of Moses and Elias should be in them, Elijah having called down fire from heaven, and hindered the rain; and Moses having turned water into blood. (See Hale's Contemp. Vol. II. page 175.)—It indeed seems to intimate, that God would interpose for their defence, as he pleaded the cause of his people and witnesses of old, in the awful manner here described.

that it said not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make mer-

that no rain shall be showered down in the days of their prophesy; and like Moses and Aaron, (Exod. vii. 20.) they have power over the waters, to turn them into blood; and to smite the earth as often as they will, with every plague; such is the prevalence of their prayers with God, that they may be said, as it were, to be armed with his omnipotence.

And when they shall have finished their testimony, according to the plan of Divine Providence, the fierce and savage beast which ascends out of the abyss, and is afterwards to be described, shall make war against them, and shall conquer, and triumph over them for a while, and carry his success so far as to kill them.

And their dead corpses [shall lie] unburied in the open street of the great city, which is spiritually called, on account of its lewdness and persecutions, S O D O M and E G Y P T; where also our Lord was crucified;

that is, in the place, where he has suffered so much in his spiritual members that he may be said to have been crucified over again.

And [persons] of [various] people, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall look on their dead bodies three days and a half, and maliciously insult over them; and they shall not permit their corpses to be laid in their graves which should be prepared for them.

And they who dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them, and be

[*Out of the abyss.*] By the abyss Dr. More understands the sea, and thinks this passage is to be explained by what follows, chap. xiii. 1. I am rather of opinion, it alludes to what had been said before, chap. ix. 11, where a king of the locusts is mentioned as a most destructive creature, called also the angel of the abyss; and it is certain, the word *abyss* is used with this latitude. (Compare Acts xxi. 4, 5.)

[*The great city.*] Mr. Fleming understands this of the German, that is, the Roman empire; of which Bohemia was a part. Indeed, it is probable the whole Roman empire may be here represented, as one idolatrous and impure city; as elsewhere, the church of Christ is represented by one pure, holy, and glorious city. It may intimate the extreme persecution many of God's witnesses should suffer; and that their enemies should triumph over them so much, that his cause should seem to be quite ruined.

[*Sodom and Egypt.*] The lewdness of Sodom, and the cruelty of Egypt, are so celebrated in scripture; as to make them proper emblems of these evils in general. And the abominable wickedness of the church of Rome, in both these respects, (I suppose not to be equalled in any other society of men, calling themselves a church,) is most justly, as well as severely, expressed by these appellations. When one sees their places of worship every where adorned with images of a crucified Saviour, one would think (as our Lord says with respect to the garniture which the persecuting Pharisees bestowed upon the sepulchres of the ancient prophets; that they meant to perpetuate the memory of the dead with honour,) that these persecutors intended to crucify Jesus in effigy: a sentiment, perhaps, not disagreeable to the original design.

SECT. *glad, and with mutual congratulation, shall send*  
 XIV. *gifts to each other, to testify their great exulta-*  
 Rev. *tion, because these two prophets, who tormented*  
 81. 10. *those who dwell upon the earth, by their plain*  
 and faithful remonstrances, shall be entirely silenced; and, as they suppose, for ever removed

11 out of any capacity of molesting them. All

these things I distinctly saw, just as the angel had represented them to me in his description; and while I was looking, with the greatest concern, upon the venerable remains of these two excellent persons, denied the common rites of burial, and exposed to all the insults of their enemies, I saw, that *after three days and an half, the Spirit of life, communicated from God, who quickeneth all things, entered into them, and they stood upon their feet again, to renew their testimony; and great fear immediately fell upon those who looked upon them, when*

12 they saw so wonderful a resurrection. *And*

*they, that is, the witnesses, heard a great voice, saying unto them from heaven, in loud accents, which I likewise distinctly heard, Come ye up hither; and they accordingly ascended up to heaven in a cloud, as our Lord had done in the sight of his apostles: and their enemies, with infinite surprise, and fruitless rage, looked on them, without being able to hinder or oppose the mar-*

13 vellous event. *And in that hour, as an earth-*

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them: and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them:

13 And the same

[*Three days and an half.*] Very different interpretations have been given of this period of time. Mr. Fleming thinks it to his purpose to observe, that from the death of Andrew Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr, to the appearance of Carolusadius and Zuinglius, at the beginning of the Reformation, was just *three years and an half*. See *Flem. of the Resur.* p. 144. The above mentioned Bishop Lloyd imagined it was fulfilled in the slaughter of the Albigenes and Waldenses, in the year 1066; and they arose in 1898. He supposes Archbishop Usher's celebrated prophecy a mistake of this piece; he thought the *trading down the court* was the affliction of external professors; (whereas it was, indeed, the general prevalence of idolatry in the church;) and that the witnesses were slain by the king of France, not by the pope; and that the earthquake, (ver. 13.) signified the de-

struction of the kingdom of France. Some think here is an allusion to the time of our Saviour's lying in the grave; and that it intimates, that the time of the witnesses suffering, will be in proportion to the time of their prophesy, which is described as a time of persecution; and so it comports with *three years and an half, 1260 days, or 42 months*. It may, in general, signify a certain limited time; and, perhaps, *three days and an half*, may be mentioned, as a reference to the state of a dead body, which will seldom keep longer without corruption. See Mr. Lowman in loc.

*Ascended up to heaven.* This was, no doubt, to signify, that the cause of true and genuine Christianity should not only be revived, but *exalted*; and that it should have so illustrious a triumph, over all opposition, as no *earthly* elevation would be sufficient adequately to represent.

hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past: and behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, on hearing these glad tidings; saying, We give

17 thanks unto thee, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come; we adore the triumphs of thine omnipotence, and of thy wisdom; because, though for a while thou didst

[Seven thousand men were killed.] This seems to represent some great calamities, which were to befall the enemies of the reformation during the following period, and which would be a great means of promoting it.

[The kingdoms of the world, &c.] The learned Grotius, that whom no great commentator was ever more mistaken in his explication of this book, strangely sinks the importance of the event here referred to, by expounding it of the liberty given to the Christians to profess their religion in Judea, when the Jews were banished. Mr. Mede, and Mr. Clark, refer it to the Reformation. Dr. Samuel

Lyke says, Whether this and the like

passages, shall have a literal accomplishment by the universal prevalence of the gospel of peace upon earth, or only in the new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is a secret in the breast of Providence, which we ought not to be over-confident in explaining. See his Posth. Sermon. Vol. III. p. 296. But it seems probable, that this may be designed to intimate, that in the period of time signified by the seventh trumpet, and the vials following it, there should be a triumph of the Christian cause in its power and purity, notwithstanding all the attempts made to pervert and corrupt it; which has been, in fact, the case. Compare chap. vi. ver. 17. note.

SECT.

XIV.

Rev.

XL. 15.



xiv. suffer the interest of thy kingdom to be in part over-boorne, as if the adversary were stronger than thou art, *thou hast at length taken to thyself thy great power, and hast reigned with an*  
 xv. *uncontroled dominion. And the nations*  
 18 *were wroth, and were transported with rage and pride, that their vain schemes were thus powerfully opposed; and having suffered them, for a season to exert their impotent efforts, thy wrath came in its awful turn; thou didst display the terrors of thy superior vengeance; and the time of the dead came; when they should be judged, and the blood of thy people avenged, and when a reward should be given to thy faithful servants, the inspired prophets, and to the saints, and, on the whole, to them that fear thy name, both small and great: for, such is thy goodness, that thou wilt not forget any one of them; and the period is at length come, [when thou] shouldst interpose in an awful and irresistible manner, to destroy those that destroy and corrupt the earth by their many vices; and particularly, by their cruel ravages, in persecuting those, who were, with the greatest integrity of heart, solicitous to have reformed it.*

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse. LONG hath the court of God's temple been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and a party of very corrupt and degenerate Christians, (if they at all deserve the name, though they proudly arrogate to themselves the title of the Catholic church,) been introducing and countenancing all the popperies and absurdities of pagan superstition, as well as more than the horrors of pagan cruelty, so as indeed to have disgraced not the gospel alone, but human nature itself. A wise and gracious Providence hath raised up witnesses for the truth in all ages; and it is a signal honour to bear a faithful and courageous testimony against these enormous corruptions, though it were unto bonds and imprisonment, and even at the expence of life. Those noble and heroic confessors God hath remarkably supported; and even when they had been in a state of mourning and oppression, they have borne their testimony and prophesied; *their prayers have been remembered before*

A reward should be given to thy servants.] The reward to be given to all that fear God, both small and great, seems to be the final reward at the judgment-day. This therefore represents that judgment-day as now nearly approaching.

God; and many have been smitten, who injured and oppressed them. But, notwithstanding this, the beast hath continued his war upon the saints, and their oppressions have increased, until, in many places, they have been cast down, and trodden in the dust, and their blood hath been poured out like water on the earth. Thus hath that great city, the metropolis of the world, once faithful and celebrated, become even as Sodom and Egypt, or even as Jerusalem where Christ himself, our Divine Master, was crucified. Thus have the enemies of the truth triumphed over the servants of the Lord, and have erected trophies of their victory. But, thanks be to God, their triumph shall not be perpetual; Christ our Redeemer will revive his expiring cause, 9, 10 in a manner as glorious and wonderful as a resurrection from the dead: he will glorify the remnant of his people; he will cause 11, 12 the earth to tremble; and shake down the towers of the enemy; and when the first and second woe is past, will bring upon them a 13 third and more terrible woe. In the faith of this triumphant event 14 let us rejoice; and though in our day we see not this glorious scene, let us consider it as approaching, when the seventh angel shall sound, and when all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. Let our prayers 15 do all that the most earnest prayers can do, towards promoting this great event. O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come, we beseech thee to take to thyself thy great power and reign; for the proudest of the enemies who oppose 17 thy kingdom reign, and even live, only by thy permission. Overbear, by thy superior rebuke, the rage of the angry nations; and give patience to thy afflicted servants, that if they 18 should wait even till the dead be judged, they may never resign the hope of the reward which thou wilt at length confer upon them: not only on the prophets, and most eminent and distinguished of the saints, but on all them that fear thy glorious and tremendous name; on the small, as well as on the great; when the destroyers of the church, and of the earth, shall be destroyed together. Amen.

# SECT. XV.

On a view of the temple of God, as opened in consequence of the seventh trumpet, a vision appears, representing the multiplication of the church, and the attempt to be made by the devil upon it, under the emblem of a woman bringing forth a son, attached and persecuted by a great dragon. Rev. XI. 19. XII. throughout.

## REVELATION XI. 19.

AND when the temple of AND when these acts of adoration passed, upon the sounding of the seventh angel, the

1. temple of God was opened in heaven; and the  
 2. veil, which seemed to separate the most holy  
 3. place, being drawn aside, the ark of his covenant  
 4. appeared in his temple, to signify further mani-  
 5. festations of the Divine presence, which were  
 6. now to be made. And as, when the law was  
 7. given from mount Sinai, the whole atmosphere  
 8. seemed in a violent commotion, which was com-  
 9. municated to the most solid parts of nature, so  
 10. there were now lightnings, and loud and awful  
 11. voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and a  
 12. great storm of hail, which had been described  
 13. as a circumstance attending the Divine appear-  
 14. ance, under former dispensations. (Compare  
 15. Pal. cxiv 1 & sim.) And thus ushered in,  
 16. there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman  
 17. of a beautiful and majestic form, clothed, as it  
 18. were, with the radiance of the meridian sun,  
 19. streaming forth on all sides, which I understood  
 20. as an emblem of the church of Christ, most glo-  
 21. riously arrayed through the comeliness and lustre  
 22. which he puts upon her and the moon was un-  
 23. der her feet, to signify the conquest which the  
 24. church should gain over all sublunary enjoy-  
 25. ments and terrors, and upon her head there was  
 26. a crown of twelve stars, to represent the twelve  
 27. apostles, who had been so illustrious an orna-  
 28. ment to that honoured society. And, to signify  
 29. the increase of the Christian church, this  
 30. woman, by which she was represented, being  
 31. apparently pregnant, cried out in travail, and  
 32. seemed as in violent pangs to be delivered. And,  
 33. while she was in these circumstances of extre-  
 34. mity, there appeared another sign in heaven  
 35. and behold! for it was a very memorable phe-  
 36. nomenon, there was a great red fieru dragon,  
 37. having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon

God was opened in  
 heaven, and there  
 was seen in his tem-  
 ple the ark of his  
 testament and there  
 were lightnings and  
 voices, and thunders,  
 and an earth-  
 quake and great  
 hail

Rev  
 XII 1  
 Christ XII and  
 there appeared a  
 great wonder in hea-  
 ven a woman cloth-  
 ed with the sun, and  
 the moon under her  
 feet, and upon her  
 head a crown of  
 twelve stars

2 And she being  
 with child, cried, tra-  
 vailing in birth, and  
 pained to be deliver-  
 ed

3 And there ap-  
 peared in heaven, and  
 behold! a great red  
 dragon, having seven  
 heads and ten horns

\* Dragon having seven heads, and ten  
 horns] I suppose most of my readers  
 will know, that a dragon is a vast serpent  
 of enormous bulk, there is one of them  
 about 23 feet long, preserved in the repo-  
 sitory of the Royal Society. And Job, the  
 celebrated African, assured me, that one  
 of them carried away a live cow in its  
 mouth, before his face. Nothing could  
 be a more proper emblem of the pene-  
 trating force, that, by the instigation of

Satan, attacked the Jews, or rather, of  
 Satan, as instigating the persecuting  
 powers, and those especially of Rome,  
 under its different states, as Paphian and  
 Christian for the destruction of it was still  
 the same. I apprehend therefore, that  
 the church is here represented as  
 pregnant to signify that while the em-  
 pire was heathen, the more vigorous she  
 it afterwards arrived to, when such laud-  
 able accessions were made to the number of

and seven crowns *his heads; seven crowns,* on each of them one; *sect.*  
upon his heads. *which represented Satan, the great enemy of* *xy.*

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

*the church, as animating a people, who were to answer, in a remarkable manner, to those mysterious and symbolical characters:*

*And he appeared as having a long tail; and with it he took an horrible sweep over the compass of a considerable part of the heaven, on which he seemed to stand; and as it then appeared as decked with stars, whereby Christian ministers were especially represented, his tail drew down a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth; which signifies, that many, whose business it was to enlighten and preserve others, should themselves be corrupted, by the attempts of this great and subtle deceiver, whose artifice and rage were so aptly represented, by the seducing nature of this vast and voracious dragon. And the dragon stood directly before the woman, who was about to bring forth, that when she was delivered he might immediately devour her child, for whose appearance he seemed eagerly to wait.*

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

*And, to signify the certain success of the church, and the care God would take to preserve it, she whom I saw in the vision as the representative of it, brought forth a masculine son,<sup>b</sup> a male-child, who appeared of a vigorous constitution, and likely soon to advance to manhood; who, as I then learned, was destined by God to a most glorious triumph over all opposition; so as to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, which they should be unable successfully to resist. And as the strength of this dragon seemed vastly superior to that of the woman, or the new-born infant, her child was, on a sudden caught up to God, even to his throne, there to be guarded as the charge and favourite of heaven, in full security from all the rage of his furious and destructive enemies: (Compare 2 Kings, xi. 23.)*

Christians, as described by the birth of the child; and its state, when an almost universal corruption was introduced, by its abode in the wilderness. The dragon, in the mean time, in all these various speculations, labours, if possible, to destroy it; at least to prevent the propagation of its interests.

<sup>b</sup> *Masculine son.* As it was impossible,

that *born a son*, should be any other than *appear a male*, I conclude, that the conjunction of these two words was intended to express the vigorous constitution of the child, and what we properly call a *masculine form*, which may, or may not, be joined with the *male sex*. Such was Esau, who from thence had the name of a *child fully made*. Gen. xxv. 25.

SECT.

XV.

Rev.

XII. 6.

*And the woman, his mother, fled into the wilderness,\* by which circumstance was represented to me, the obscure condition in which true Christianity should long remain, while antichristian principles and practices every-where prevailed. There she dwelt, where she had a place prepared for her by the ever-watchful providence of God, that she might there be nourished, one thousand two hundred [and] sixty days,<sup>d</sup> for God took care that she should be nourished, though in a wilderness, raising up friends and supporters for her during that desolate and melancholy time.*

*And there was the appearance of a very formidable war in heaven, and several mighty battles seemed to be fought before my sight; Michael, the great leader of God's host, and therein an emblem of the great Emmanuel, and his angels, were marshalled on the one side; and they made war against the dragon; and on the other side, the dragon made war with him; and his angels likewise, consisting of many legions of infernal spirits, in confederacy with the great head of the apostasy, made war against him. Nevertheless they did not prevail against the armies of God, neither was place found for them any more in heaven;<sup>e</sup> but, being*

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels,

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

\* *Into the wilderness.*] I think I never met with a 'wilderness' interpretation than that which Grotius gives of this place; referring it to the banishment of Christianity out of Rome, into little neighbouring towns and villages, (which, in comparison of that capital city, might seem a wilderness) during the time of the seduction of Simon Magus; an event neither certain in itself, nor, if ever so certain, by any mean, answering to the description here given, and the great and capital idea suggested, and so much insisted upon in this prophecy. It is on the same principles that he explains the triumph of heaven on casting out the dragon; of Simon's being vanquished in his contest with St. Peter at Rome.

<sup>d</sup> *One thousand two hundred and sixty days.*] These days are years of Papal usurpation. Mr. Fleming (who hath the number here to be followed by Sir Isaac Newton) and Mr. Lowman, though not as I remember named by the former, whom the latter professes to follow, supposes them to begin in the year 736, when Pe-

pin of France made a grant to the Pope, of the temporal dominion of Rome, on the destruction of the Exarchate of Ravenna, to which that imperial city for a while belonged: Upon this the pope began the eighth head of Rome; and the period of his continuing so will end about the year 2016: or if (which seems most reasonable,) prophetic years be used in the computation, consisting of 360 days, about 2000, which he supposes will be the beginning of the millennium. FLEM. of Res. p. 126.

\* *Neither was place found for them any more in heaven.*] I once thought this referred to a representation made to the apostle, in the vision, of the first expulsion of Satan from heaven; but upon considering that he, who is represented as cast out of the Divine presence, is described as the accuser of the brethren, who had before been accusing them day and night before God; I was induced to change my mind. On the whole, I am extremely dubious about this, and refer it to further consideration, whether this may not

And the great dragon was cast out; that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

unable to stand their ground, they seemed to be expelled, and fall down to the earth. *And thus the great, furious, and voracious dragon was cast out; [even] the old serpent, so long experienced in the arts of mischief: who, from his falsehood, is called the devil, or the false accuser; and from his malice, Satan, or the general adversary: he, who deceives the whole world by his subtle temptations, was cast out of heaven, and sunk down to the earth; and his confederate angels were cast out with him, following him in his ruin, as they had done in his guilt.*

Rey. XII. 9.

10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.

*And I heard a great voice saying in heaven, Now is come the long expected salvation; and the power, and the kingdom of our God is now exerted and established; and the authority of his Christ shall now prevail against all opposition; because the malignant and perfidious accuser of our brethren is now cast out, who carried his malice to such a height, that he accused them before our God day and night: unrestrained by a sense of the Divine presence, he was ready, as in the instance of Job, (Job i. 9; ii. 5.) continually to charge them with the greatest evils before him who was indeed the Witness of their integrity.*

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

*And now they have overcome him, formidable as he appeared, with all his confederate angels; and it is by the blood of the Lamb they have gained this glorious victory: its sacred efficacy has procured them Divine strength and grace: and the remembrance of it has wrought powerfully on their souls. And their victory has been, under this, in a great measure, occasioned by the word of their testimony; by that word of the gospel to which they had borne their testimony with so much fidelity, and at so great an expence, for they loved not their lives unto the death; they exposed themselves to the greatest dangers; and many of them actually met their death in this glorious conflict; but they fell to rise, and triumph and reign. And therefore rejoice, ye heavens; and ye who inhabit them, and, as it were, pitch*

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in

signify the conquest of Satan by Christ, by the first publication of the gospel. Mr. Dowman interprets it of the victory over Satan and his power, when Christian-

nity had fully prevailed over heathenism in the empire, and when an effectual stop was put to the Mahometan impostor in these western parts.

SECT. your tents there: let all the celestial armies proclaim the victory with joy. But woe to those that inhabit the terraqueous globe, consisting of the earth and the sea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time: and therefore, is maliciously bent to make the most he can of it, exerting one powerful effort more to establish

13 and confirm his cause. And when the dragon saw that he was cast out on the earth, I perceived him to be greatly enraged; and saw, that mindful of the original of the late war, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth a male-child.

14 And, to signify the extraordinary provision that should be made for her deliverance, there were immediately given to the woman two wings, like those of a great and strong eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,<sup>1</sup> unto her place, which as I observed before, was appointed for her; where, as I said, she is nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days; that is, for a time, or one year, and times, or two years, and half a time, or year, that is, for three years and an half, which is the same period. And thus she was hid from the face of the serpent, and preserved from his destructive efforts.

15 And the serpent threw out of his mouth a flood of water, like a river,<sup>2</sup> after the woman, as she was winging her flight from him, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth assisted the woman;

and the earth opened its mouth, and drank up the flood which the dragon threw out of his mouth,<sup>3</sup> so that it sunk as fast as it fell, and could not swell into such a formidable current as he seemed to have intended it should.

17 And the dragon was enraged against the woman,

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, unto her place; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time; from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with

<sup>1</sup> Fly into the wilderness.] This is the same event that was represented, ver. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A flood of water, like a river.] Perhaps this is one of the artifices, which these enormous creatures make use of to beat down their prey, when flying from them; though I cannot, at present, remember any passage that illustrates it.

<sup>3</sup> The earth assisted the woman, &c.] This may intimate, that notwithstanding all the violent and craft attempts of

Satan, and of those persecuting powers whom he instigates, God will raise up some persons, (and perhaps, as Mr. Lowman observes, it may mean, some persons of power and authority in the world,) to protect his witnesses, and secure many of those who faithfully retain the testimony of Jesus; and to prevent paganism from being entirely overthrown and lost. And this has been, in fact, the case in many nations; and particularly in this.

the woman, and went to see all his efforts against her defeated by a superior power; and he went away to excite new troubles, and to make war against the woman, and against the remainder of her seed, even as many as might by any means be brought within his reach; nor did he spare any of those who keep the commandments of God inviolable, and have the courage to retain, at the greatest expence or hazard, the testimony of Jesus Christ, in his pure uncorrupted gospel.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER concealed and unknown wonders may be intimated, in some parts of this grand and awful vision, in others it contains very obvious and important instructions.—While we are beholding this emblematical representation of the Christian church, let us adore the great original Sun of righteousness, who has decked her with his glorious beams, and will at length cause every faithful member of this blessed society, to shine forth as the Sun in his Father's kingdom. And let us be desirous of treading this changeable and uncertain world under our feet. Let us thankfully own the hand which has crowned the church with the apostles, as with a diadem; and, taught by their precepts, and inspired by their example, let us prepare ourselves for that sacred war, to which we are called, the war against the devil, and his confederate hosts. It is indeed under a very formidable type that he is here represented:—His cruelty, his subtlety, his experience in all the arts of destruction, are painted out with dreadful propriety, in the old serpent, the great dragon; but, formidable as his violence, or artful and potent as the confederacy of infernal spirits may be, here is a victory gained over him, which calls for the congratulation of all the armies of the Lord: the dragon and his angels are cast out; the saints are enabled to triumph over him, feeble and impotent as they are. But, in what way are they able to overcome him? It is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Instructive and edifying admonition! Let this be our confidence, even the banner of the cross, the blood of the Saviour, who died upon it; and, in this signal, we shall come off conquerors too; faith in him shall be our shield, the word of God shall be our sword, the sword of the Spirit; and Satan, thus resisted, shall flee before us, (James iv. 7.) In vain are the floods of temptation, which he may attempt to throw out of his mouth, to debauch our principles, or practices; they shall be entirely swallowed up. And though the church be for a while in the wilderness, it shall be happily sheltered, and tenderly nourished; there its members shall be in safe-



450 *A beast rises from the sea, with seven heads and ten horns :*

SECT. *ty, as if they were taken up to God, even into his throne, till the*  
 XV. *time which he has appointed for its triumph. In the mean*  
 Verse while, however, the sons of malice, under the instruction and  
 5, 10 influence of the great accuser of the brethren, may defame  
 11 them: however persecution may attack and harass them; let  
 them be courageous and undaunted, not *losing their lives even*  
*to the death, in the cause of Christ; for, though they fall, they*  
*shall rise again to certain victory and glory; nor shall death*  
*bring down their heads so low, as to render them unworthy of*  
*wearing a crown of eternal life.*

## SECT. XVI.

*The vision of the two beasts, and the outrages committed by them.*  
 Rev. XIII. throughout.

### REVELATION XIII. 1.

SECT. *AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, as I ap-*  
 XVI. *prehended in the vision, and saw a fierce*  
 Rev. and *savage beast<sup>a</sup> ascending out of the sea, hav-*  
 XIII. 1. *ing seven heads, and ten horns; to intimate the*  
*city of Rome standing upon seven hills, and the*  
*ten kingdoms into which its dominions were to*  
*be divided: and upon his horns [were] ten dia-*  
*demis; to signify the royal power that was to*  
*be found in each: and on his heads [there were]*  
*names of blasphemy,<sup>b</sup> such names as it was most*  
*profane and blasphemous to assume.*

REV. XIII. 1.  
 AND I stood upon  
 the sand of the  
 sea, and saw a beast  
 rise up out of the  
 sea, having seven  
 heads and ten horns,  
 and upon his horns  
 ten crowns, and up-  
 on his heads the  
 name of blasphemy.

2 *And the beast which I saw, was, as to the*  
*form of the greater part of its body, like a leop-*  
*ard, and its feet [were] like those of a bear,*  
*to signify its exceeding great fierceness; and its*  
*mouth was like the mouth of a roaring and furious*  
*lion, and the dragon, who still appeared on the*  
*visionary scene, that is, the devil, gave him,*

2 And the beast  
 which I saw was like  
 unto a leopard, and  
 his feet were as the  
 feet of a bear, and  
 his mouth as the  
 mouth of a lion:  
 and the dragon  
 gave him his

<sup>a</sup> *Savage beast.*] This I understand of the papal power, as exercised by the bishop of Rome, supported by his regular clergy, and by those secular princes, who have given up their name and power to him. And when the dragon is said to give him his power and throne, &c. ver. 2. it intimates, that he should have his seat or residence there, where the dragon had reigned, even at Rome; which had been the seat of idolatry and persecution during its pagan state.

<sup>b</sup> *Names of blasphemy.*] They must have very little acquaintance with the arrogant titles which have been assumed or admitted by the popes, who discern not in them a very remarkable illustration of this circumstance of the prophecy. — Instead of *onyma*, the common reading. I think *onymata*, *names*, in the plural, which is supported by the authority of the Alexandrian, and other manuscripts, to be preferable.

power, and his seat, by solemn delegation, his power, and his throne, and great authority in his kingdom; so that this

beast seemed to be constituted his vicegerent; however he might pretend to represent a very different person.

3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

And I saw one of his heads wounded, as it were, to death; that is, in such a manner, that a recovery seemed impossible; to signify those early efforts, which should be made, to put a stop to the usurpation, cruelties, and blasphemy, represented by these heads, and the names written on them. And yet its mortal wound, as one would have thought it must have proved, was unaccountably healed. And the whole earth wondered at so strange an event, [and] they [followed] after the wild beast, thinking a greater argument of its extraordinary power arose from its cure, than could have taken place, had he never been wounded at all.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

And they, that is the inhabitants of the earth, worshipped the dragon who gave his authority to the wild beast; and they worshipped the wild beast, even as with God-like adoration, saying, Who, that pretends to Deity in heaven, or earth, [is] like unto the beast? or who can ever presume to make war against him, since his power is so well established, without hazard of immediate or certain destruction? And there was given to it, that is, to this monster, a mouth, speaking great things, and blasphemy, as with a human voice; to signify that it was influenced by that being, who assuming the form and organs of a brute, had used the power of speech for the most mischievous purposes. And there was also given unto it power to make war with the saints with some apparent advantage, for the term above-mentioned, of forty-two months; that is,

Never been wounded at all.] It is certain that *intellectual efforts*, to recover the liberty and purity of the church, have sometimes been improved into occasions of further usurpations; and many have been intimidated by them from making any further attempts. Yet they are not entirely destitute of their good effects, as they at least deliver the souls of those who have exerted their utmost ability in making them, and may afterwards

be productive of better fruits and consequences.

Power to make war: *πολεμικὴν ἐξουσίαν* Our translators have followed those copies, which omit the word *πολεμικὴν*, and have rendered *power to continue*, a sense which, it must be owned, it sometimes bears, particularly, Acts xv. 33. xx. 3. but I have chosen to rely on those copies which retain the word *πολεμικὴν*. See ver. 7.

SECT. one thousand twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. *And he opened his infernal*  
 XVII. *mouth to utter blasphemy against God, even to*  
 Rev. *blaspheme his holy and venerable name, and his*  
 XIII. C. *tabernacle pitched among men; and, not only*  
*did he speak malignant things against the inhabitants of the earth, but even against those that dwell in heaven.\** (Compare Dan. xi. 36.)

7 *And it was, by Divine permission, given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them for a time; and so universal was the success of his pernicious undertakings, that it seemed, as if there was given to him power over every tribe, and tongue, and nation. And all*

*the inhabitants of the earth shall be so deluded with his artifices, or intimidated by his errors, that they shall worship him†, that is, all whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slain; for some were registered in that book even from the foundation of the world‡: and they shall, by a secret energy, be preserved in the midst of so general and ruinous*

*a defection. If any one has an ear to hear, let him attentively hear this; for it is a matter of a most important nature, and the most surprising phenomenon which can be imagined, that such an idolatrous and persecuting power should arise in the Christian church, and that*

6 *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

7 *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.*

9 *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

\* *Those that dwell in heaven.*] It is very injurious to the saints and angels, when they are represented as desirous of attracting to themselves that worship which ought to be appropriated to God; and nothing worse can be imagined of them, than that they should be delighted with such services as are paid them in the Romish ritual.

† *The inhabitants of the earth shall worship him.*] The extravagant idolatry here mentioned, is very suitable to the temper and practice of those, who, in order to avoid persecution, comply with the claims and demands of the papal power, contrary to their conscience; for it is the language of such a compliance, that the wrath of men is more to be dreaded than that of God himself.

‡ *Registered from the foundation of the world.*] I am well aware of what has been said to justify the sense which these words must have, if taken in connection

with those which immediately precede them; but, after all, it is very harsh to say, *Christ was slain from the foundation of the world.* He is in another place called simply, *the Lamb slain*, Rev. v. 12, and a kingdom is said to be prepared for good men *from the foundation of the world*, Mat. xxv. 34. And, laying these things together, I think it abundantly sufficient to justify the interpretation I have here given, especially when compared with another passage in this book, chap. xvii. 8. *whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world.* Mr. Peirce thinks it is an allusion to the custom of registering the actions of worthy persons, as Mal. iii. 17, undoubtedly is; and that this book of life is, as it were, the catalogue of good men that have lived in all ages. Peirce on Phil. iv. 5. But I cannot be of opinion, that this exhausts the full meaning of the expression.

10 He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

God should suffer it so far to prevail. Nevertheless, God will not forget the injuries his people sustain; but, *if any one lead [them] into captivity, he shall be led into captivity himself by a superior power, which he shall not be able to resist; and, if any one slay others with the sword of injustice and cruelty, he shall himself be slain with the sword of Divine vengeance, when God comes to make inquisition for blood.* In the mean time, while they are waiting for his appearance, *here is a sufficient exercise for the patience and the faith of the saints:* it is the greatest trial to which they were ever brought; let them therefore consider themselves as called out by God to it, and be assured that he will limit it both as to its duration and degree, in a manner answerable to the purposes of his infinite wisdom, and of his peculiar love to them.

SECT.  
XVI.  
Rev.  
XIII. 10.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

*And, to represent a very crafty and insidious power, which should join with the former, and greatly abet its sanguinary persecutions, I saw another beast<sup>b</sup> ascending out of the earth; and it had two horns like a lamb; but, whatever gentleness there might be in that circumstance of its appearance, it spake like a dragon.* And<sup>12</sup>

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

*such is the nature of their alliance, that it exercises all the power of the first beast, in its presence; and it makes the earth, and those that dwell in it, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, whose interest, which seemed so much endangered, was greatly revived, being thus powerfully abetted and supported.* And he; in order to confirm his subtle pretences, to lord it over the consciences of men, *does great miracles,<sup>k</sup> so as even to make fire come down from heaven to earth before men;*

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

<sup>b</sup> *[Another beast.]* As I look upon the former to be the *papal power*, I am ready, with the best critics I know, to interpret this of the *religious orders of the church of Rome*, (particularly that of the Jesuits,) who have many of them *temporal estates and jurisdictions* added to their spiritual, and thus have greatly supported the papacy.

<sup>c</sup> *[Out of the earth.]* This beast is said to ascend from the earth, whereas the other ascended from the sea, to make the distinction

between them the more remarkable; but what other mystery may be suggested, I cannot conjecture.

<sup>k</sup> *[Great miracles.]* The artful imposture, which the regular clergy, that is the several orders of monks, and especially the Jesuits, have used to persuade the people of the truth of their pretended miracles and revelations, seem to be finely delineated by this otherwise amazing description.

SECT. strange artifices he has, to persuade them of his  
XVI. being endowed with more than natural powers,  
Rev. and that the vengeance of heaven will be armed  
XIII. 14. against all that oppose him! *And he deceiveth*

*the inhabitants of the earth, by the signs which it is given him to do before the beast; commanding the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast, that had the wound of the sword, and yet lived; that is, he teaches men to extol, and almost adore, that which in itself*

15 *is most contemptible and detestable. And it was given to him, by a Divine permission, to give spirit and breath, as it were, to the image of the beast; that the image of the beast might speak with an audible voice. And, so zealous and powerful is he in abetting this cause, that by this miracle, he should cause as many as will not worship the image of the beast to be put*

16 *to death. And he causeth all, of every rank and condition, both small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to receive the mark of this detestable power, on their right-hand, or their foreheads, in token of becoming its subjects and property. And, so rigorously is this enforced, that no one should be able to buy, or sell, but one who has some such trace of the mark,<sup>m</sup> or the name of the beast, or the number, which is equivalent to the numeral letters of his name, and which I thought, in the vision, I saw impressed on the hands and foreheads of many.*

18 *Herein is a great effort of wisdom; let him therefore, whoever he be, who hath an enlarged and penetrating understanding, beyond what is common, compute the number of the beast; for*

14 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he hath power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

15 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

16 *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.*

17 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

18 *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the*

<sup>1</sup> *Image of the beast.* What the image of the beast is, distinct from the beast itself, I confess I know not; and therefore interpret the expressions, *making an image, and giving it breath*, &c. of idolizing the power of the Pope, and compelling persons to pay him homage to it, and obey the edicts it published. And all the enormous fury of the inquisition, which is managed by one of the regular orders included in this interpretation, namely, the Dominican, is a remarkable verification of the following part of the prophecy, of *his causing all that would not worship it to be put to death.*

<sup>m</sup> *Receive the mark.* I have elsewhere observed, (Sermon to young people, Sermon iv. p. 73.) that it was customary to mark soldiers and slaves with some impressions, either on their hands or foreheads, by which they might be known to belong to their respective masters or commanders; and idolaters, with the signature of the god they worshipped. Perhaps this may particularly refer to the sacraments which the people are obliged, on the highest penalty, to receive from the *Romish priests*, and which none can receive without such superstitious and idolatrous rites, as are, in effect, *worshipping the image of the beast*.

number . . . man; *it is the number of a man,*<sup>n</sup> or the numeral let- SECT.  
and his number is six ters in the name of a man, and his number is, XVI.  
hundred threescore and six, and amounts on the whole, to six hundred and  
and six, sixty-six; which I leave to the intelligent reader  
to decypher. Rev. XIII. 18

#### IMPROVEMENT.

WHOEVER is the *beast* intended, and whatever be meant by his image, his character, beyond all controversy, is very odious and detestable; for he is represented as *blaspheming the name of God, and his tabernacle, and as making war with the saints.* Verse 6, 7 There have arisen such impious monsters in the Christian church, and none among them have been more openly and enormously wicked and profane, than those who have made the loudest pretensions to be the viceregents of Christ, and invested with his whole authority. Many of the saints of God have seemed to have been overcome by this antichristian tyranny; many have been led into captivity: many have been slain with the sword but those who took them captive, continuing impenitent, shall be taken, and the slayers slain. O, may our names be written in the Lamb's book of life! then shall we be secure in the midst of all these formidable evils; and, from every trial of our faith and patience, shall come out as gold seven times purified.—Let us not be troubled and offended, to discern these usurpations in the course of Divine Providence prevailing, and the time actually come, in many parts of the world, in which men can neither buy nor sell, nor are permitted to enjoy any other natural or civil privilege, if they will not *give up their names to the beast, receive his mark*, and implicitly submit to his authority. The prophecy justly removes all offence which might be taken at the event; and discerning its accomplishment, we may embolden our hopes, that the triumphs of Divine justice over these minis-

<sup>n</sup> *The number of a man, &c.*] Of all the various interpretations given to this text, which it would be endless to enumerate, and much more to canvass, I find none that pleases me so well, as that of Sir Isaac Newton; that the words *ἀνθρώπου* *ανθρωπου* the *man of Latium*, or of Rome, whose numeral letters, taken together, make 666, are here referred to. And I suppose this number, is mentioned to signify, that the appearance of that power, whose efforts were to continue 1260 years, (compare chap. xii. 6, note 4,) was to happen about 666 years after the date of the revelations, A.D. 96. And this I take to be the grand key by which the time of the fall of Babylon is to be calculated,

as it fixes the rise of the *beast* to the year 756, or thereabouts, when, upon the destruction of the exarchate of Ravenna, the Pope became a temporal monarch; that is, in prophetic language a *beast*. See many other conjectures in Limborch's Theol. 7. xi. 19. Mr. Potter thinks the number referred to, is the cube root of 666, namely, 25. (which has led Dr. More to fix upon number 12, relating to the church of Christ, and number 25, relating to antichrist;) and concludes farther, that the exact cube is not mentioned, to prevent too sudden a discovery. Compare More's Theol. p. 134. Grotius, referring it to Trajan, is very ungrounded in every view.

SECT. XVII.  
Verse 13, 14  
11 ters of the dragon, as they are also foretold, will be fulfilled with the like punctuality. And O, may the church of God be secured from their artifices, and fortified against their terrors; and, in his own due time, may he break the jaw-bone of the wicked!  
12 May he utterly disarm all the power and policy of those who take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed; and though their confederacies may seem to mock all human opposition, yet, at his appearance, they shall melt away as snow before the sun, when the time to remember Sion, *ye he set fire* come. (Psal. cii. 12.)

## S E C T. XVII.

*The vision of the Lamb standing upon mount Sion, surrounded with those whom he had redeemed; and of several mighty angels, proclaiming his vengeance upon the beast, and upon those that worship him. Rev. XIV. 1, throughout.*

## REVELATION XIV. I.

SECT. XVII.  
Rev. XIV. 1.  
AND while these terrible objects were before me, I looked, and beheld another object, which animated my heart under the alarm and distress they gave me: for behold, the Lamb was standing upon mount Sion, which was represented to me also in my vision, as the place on which the temple, that had been opened in heaven stood; and with him were one hundred forty-four thousand, who, in opposition to the name of the beast, which was so rigorously imposed, and by many received with so base a submission, had the name of God his Father written on their foreheads, in token of their inviolable submission, and entire dedication to him. And I heard a voice out of heaven, which was loud as the sound of many waters, when tossing themselves in the ocean, and like the sound of great thunder; and, loud and awful as it was, it was accompanied with a most delightful harmony; for I heard the voice of harpers playing upon their harps, aiding their instruments with the melody of their voices. And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders, who in this vision, still appeared to be present; and none could learn the song, unless the one hundred and forty-four thousand, who are redeemed from the earth, and are as representatives of the whole body of the

REV. XIV. 1.  
AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts; and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

SECT.

XVII.

Rev.

XIV. \*

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

redeemed. These are pure and unspotted souls, free from the idolatries and other abominations which have been so prevalent in the age in which they live; or, to speak in the prophetic language, these are: *they who have not been polluted with women: for they are chaste virgins*: these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; and having humbly traced his footsteps upon earth, shall be led by him to the possession of various and ever-new delights in the celestial world. These are they, who were redeemed from among men, [as] the first-fruits, consecrated to God and to the Lamb, most excellent in their kind, and separate from every unclean or profane use, to the immediate honour of God, and of their Redeemer. And no deceit, or evil of any kind, was found in their mouth, for they are entirely blameless before the throne of God, and exalted to that world, where he reigns in perfect purity, as well as Divine glory, nor can any thing unclean be admitted in his presence.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

And I saw another glorious angel, flying with strength and rapidity, through the midst of heaven, having in his hand the volume of a book, which he displayed, as with an air of complacency and triumph, even the everlasting gospel, to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation and tribe, and tongue, and people, dispersed over the world. And as he passed,

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

I heard him making proclamation of its important contents, and saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, with becoming reverence and submission, for the hour of his judgment is come, when he shall execute vengeance on his enemies, and worship him who made heaven and earth, and sea, and the limpid fountains of waters, which are derived from it, and flow

\* They are virgins.† This probably signifies their freedom from idolatry, which is, in a spiritual sense, fornication; nor can it, with any reason, be urged against marriage.

† First-fruits, most excellent in their kind, &c.] Th. i. the Jewish first-fruits had this property, will appear from comparing the following texts relating to

them; Deut. xviii. 4; Exod. xxii. 29; Numb. xviii. 12; Micah vii. 1. Compare James i. 18.

‡ Angels flying, &c.] The flight of an angel admirably represents the swiftness of that progress by which the gospel dispersed itself over the whole world, as Archbishop Tillotson well observes. See his Works, Vol. II p. 144.



SECT. back into it. *And another great angel followed*

XVII. him, crying out, as with the voice of exulta-

tion and triumph, saying, *It is fallen, it is*

Rev. fallen, [even] *Babylon, the great city, a city*

XIV. 8. famous as Babylon of old, when it was at the

height of its power and glory: God in his righ-

teous vengeance hath brought it down, *because*

*it made all the nations drink of the wine of its*

*raging fornication*, till they were stimulated

thereby to the most scandalous and furious ex-

cesses. *And a third angel followed them both,*

*saying with a loud voice, if any one*, how strong

soever the temptation may have been, *worship*

*the beast, and his image, and receive the mark*

*on his forehead, or on his hand*<sup>a</sup>; if he subject

himself to this wicked and idolatrous form of

religion, and obstinately persist in it, notwith-

standing the light which God is giving to dis-

10 cover its errors and superstitious; *He also*

*shall, himself, drink of the wine of the indigna-*

*tion of God, which is tempered with various in-*

*gredient: of wrath, without any mixture of mer-*

*cy, in the cup of his wrath; and he shall be tor-*

*mented with fire and brimstone, in the day*

*of God's future vengeance, in the presence*

*of the holy angels*<sup>c</sup>, and in the presence of the

*Lamb*<sup>d</sup>, whose religion has so shamefully been

perverted and dishonoured, even by those who

11 pretend entirely to have engrossed it: *And the*

*smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever,*

*without any period; and they have no rest day*

*nor night who worship the beast and his image,*

*and whoever, in contempt of the authority and*

*testimony of God, receive the mark of his name*<sup>e</sup>;

8 And there fol-

lowed another angel,

saying, Babylon is

fallen, is fallen, that

great city, because

she made all nations

drink of the wine of

the wrath of her for-

nication.

9 And the third an-

gel followed them,

saying with a loud

voice, If any man

worship the beast and

his image, and rece-

ive his mark in his

forehead, or in his

hand,

10 The same shall

drink of the wine of

the wrath of God,

which is poured out

without mixture into

the cup of his indig-

nation; and he shall

be tormented with

fire and brimstone,

in the presence of the

holy angels, and in

the presence of the

Lamb;

11 And the smoke

of their torment as-

cendeth up for ever

and ever; and they

have no rest day nor

night, who worship

the beast and his

image, and whoever

receiveth the mark of

his name.

[On his hand.] Compare sect. xvi. note -

- *Presence of the holy angels.*] From hence Mr. Reynolds conjectures, that possibly the torments of the damned may, at certain seasons, through eternal ages, become a spectacle to the inhabitants of the blessed world above. See his *Queries concerning angels*, p. 305.

<sup>c</sup> *Presence of the Lamb.*] This signifies, (as Dr. Clarke well observes,) that it shall not only be appointed by the infinite Majesty of God, the righteous Judge of all, but approved moreover by men and angels, and by him who, who loved us un-

to death, even Christ, that merciful and compassionate High Priest. Clarke's *Posth. Sermon*, Vol. I. p. 341.

<sup>d</sup> *The smoke of their torment - who worship the beast, &c.*] When I seriously reflect on this text, and how directly the force of it lies against those, who, contrary to the light of their consciences, continue in the communion of the church of Rome, for secular advantage, or to avoid the terror of persecution, it almost makes me tremble; and I heartily wish, that all others, who connive at those things in the discipline and worship of protestant churches, which they, in their conscience,

12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

11 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from hence forth: Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

as the badge of their devotedness to him. In the mean time, these deceivers shall have their day; when all the terrors of secular power shall enforce their impious and iniquitous decrees. SECT. XVII.

And *here is the patience of the saints; here [are] the triumphs of those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, and are determined to maintain the purity of the gospel amidst these formidable efforts to corrupt it.* REV. XIV. 12.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, 13 Write this for the instruction of mankind in the most distant ages: *henceforth blessed [are] the dead, that die in the Lord:* so numerous, and so various, are the calamities which persecuting powers shall bring upon the saints, that there is abundant reason to congratulate those who are taken out of this vexatious, oppressive, and afflictive world, whether by a natural, or by a violent death; *you, saith the Spirit, by whose inspiration and command I record it, they are assuredly blessed; for they are removed, that they may for ever rest from their labours, and their sorrows; and their works of piety and goodness, though so ill requited here, shall not be forgotten, but shall follow them into the presence of God, shall be acknowledged there in the most condescending manner, and through the riches of Divine mercy, recompensed with eternal glory.* Accordingly, let this remembrance of their faith and patience, in connection with this transcendant reward, encourage and animate their surviving brethren to imitate their examples.

think to be *saful* remains of popish superstition and corruption, would seriously attend to this passage, which is one of the most *dreadful* in the whole book of God, and weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse, which is sufficient to *make the ears of every one that hears it, to tingle.* Compare Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

<sup>b</sup> *Henceforth.*] The learned Witsius understands this to mean, from the time of their death: as if it had been said, *immediately after their dissolution they are blessed.* Wits. Oecum. Ford. 3. XIV. 21 And Mr. Baxter observes, *They are said to follow when they*

*are dead, not to come many thousand years after them.*

<sup>c</sup> *Die in the Lord.*] Archbishop Tillotson interprets this chiefly of those who die martyrs in the cause of Christ; who, no doubt, are included. But I think the phrase more extensive. There is, perhaps, an allusion to the words of Solomon, Eccl. iv. 2. *I praised the dead already dead, rather than the living, yet alive, in time of extreme degeneracy, and bitter persecution.* See his Works, Vol. II. page 153.—Bishop Burnet, (on the Articles, p. 260) and many other protestant writers, have justly urged this text, as demonstrative against the popish doctrine of purgatory

SECT.

XVII.

Rev.

XIV. 14.

*And I saw, and behold, another remarkable appearance offered itself to my view; a white cloud, shining with wonderful lustre and beauty; and on the cloud one sitting, who seemed by the majesty of his form, to be like the Son of man, as represented in Daniel; having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand, instead of a sceptre, a sharp sickle: so that he seemed to be going forth, as to some wonderful harvest.*

15 *And as soon as I had viewed him, another angel came out of the temple of God, crying with a loud voice, to him that sat upon the cloud, Put forth thy sickle, and reap, for the season of thy reaping is come, because the harvest of the earth is now fully ripe. (Compare Joel iii. 13.) Execute therefore this judgment, O thou mighty Messenger of God, which the wickedness of the*

16 *world hath righteously deserved. And, accordingly, he that sat upon the cloud put forth his sickle on the earth, with strength and rapidity; and the harvest of the earth was presently reaped; signifying, that the execution of the threatened vengeance should be very speedy. But it seemed that the vintage yet remained to*

17 *be gathered in. And, in reference to this, another angel came out of the temple that was in heaven; and he also was armed as the other, like the Son of man, and had a sharp sickle in*

18 *his hand. And another angel, just at that instant, came from the altar, having, as it seemed, power over the fire of it; and he called out with a great cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and lop off the clusters of the vine, which grows upon, and extends itself almost over the earth, for its grapes are ripe; and the persons represented by it have so abused the Divine long-suffering, that it is proper the season of their destruction should*

19 *commence. And accordingly the angel, with celerity and vigour, thrust out his sickle upon the earth, and lopped off the grapes from the vine of the earth; and he threw [them] into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, which seemed*

20 *to stand ready to receive them. And the wine-press [which stood], out of the city, was trodden with great violence; and the blood of the grape, which I knew betokened the blood of*

14 *And I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*

15 *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

16 *And he that sat on the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

17 *And another angel came out of the temple, which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

18 *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.*

19 *And the angel thrust in his sickle, into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.*

20 *And the wine-press was trodden without intermission, and*

blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. *those who were enemies to God and his people, came out of the wine-press in such abundance, that it made a kind of inundation, like a vast river or sea, and reached up even to the bridles of the horses, which attempted to pass the channel through which it flowed, at the distance of one thousand six hundred furlongs.* In such an amazing extent and quantity was the effusion of blood represented to me in vision. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 3)

SECT. XVII.  
Rev. XIV. 20

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Is what awful characters is the righteous vengeance of God here described ! How quickly do his haughtiest enemies fall before him, like corn before the sickle, or clusters of grapes before the knife ! His wine-press shall indeed be trodden, and the blood of his enemies shall overflow : but *blessed are all they that put their trust in him, and look to him, who trod the wine-press alone, and who distinguishes himself by the title of him, who is mighty to save, and who travels in the greatness of his strength,* (Isa. lxiii. 1—3.) Arrayed in terror, he will vanquish all the enemies of his people ; but, to his faithful followers, will appear with the gentleness of the Lamb, of the Lamb their Redeemer, to whose honour their voices and their harps shall resound. O, how happy are those souls, who by his special love, being redeemed from among men, and having humbly traced the steps of his purity and goodness on earth, shall, in the heavenly world, follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes ! Let us be accordingly engaged to preserve ourselves unspotted from the world, and to walk worthy of so exalted a hope and expectation ; to keep our mouths from every deceit, that we may be found blameless in the presence of God, and of the Lamb. God hath granted us the everlasting gospel, on purpose that we might be taught to fear him, and to give glory to his name ; to worship him, as the great Creator and righteous Governor of the universe : and while we are under the conduct of his providence, and devoted to his service, let nothing discourage or dismay us. Though for the

[One thousand six hundred furlongs.] As a furlong is one eighth of a mile, this would amount to 200 miles. This representation, like the dimensions of that temple, which Ezekiel saw, may seem extravagantly large, and such as the eye, in vision, could not possibly judge of. I look upon it, therefore, as only an hyperbolical expression, to signify its exceeding greatness : unless possibly it may point out the extension of that country

over which the judgment should extend which is here prophetically referred to. Though perhaps it may only intimate in general, that after the antichristian powers had long oppressed and persecuted the saints ; the power of Christ should humble and destroy them, and therefore they are represented as a harvest ripe, and fit for reaping, &c. the measure of their iniquities being full.

SECT. XVII. present we see that *Babylon is triumphant*, though its patrons are making themselves drunk with the blood of his saints, a very different cup is prepared for her, and will assuredly be given her to drink; even the cup of the wrath of God, poured forth without mixture; while blessings, inconceivable and eternal, are reserved for those that suffer for righteousness sake. Let the patience, therefore, of those who keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Christ, be invincible; for their fiercest and most formidable enemies, can only kill the body; and, having done that, can neither prevent nor delay the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord. The infallible Spirit has said it, the blessed apostle hath, by Divine command, recorded it, for the instruction and triumph of his people in all ages, that they rest from their labours, and that their works follow them; while those that persecuted and hated them, rest not day nor night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And, O, that numbers of those who worship the beast, and who receive its image, may be awakened, while the day of their visitation continues; lest they also, after having dealt damnation, in their arrogant censures upon men of much purer faith, and holier lives, than themselves, be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

## S E C T. XVIII.

The appearance of seven angels, with seven vials, full of the seven last plagues; and the pouring out of the three first vials, with their consequent effects. Rev. XV. 1, to the end. XVI. 7.

## REVELATION XV. 1.

SECT.

XVIII.

Rev.

XV. 1.

AND I saw another great and wonderful sign in heaven, which fixed my attention, and will demand that of the reader: Seven angels, who had the seven last plagues; so called, because in them the wrath of God was to be completed; and, because they refer to some of the last judgments, which he shall pour forth on the enemies of the church, before the time of its most illustrious triumph. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass<sup>a</sup>; a great crystal vessel,

REV. XV. 1.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

<sup>a</sup> And I saw as it were a sea of glass

<sup>a</sup> Sea of glass.] Some explain this in a different manner, as if there were properly a sea, seeming to lie before the ground which appeared in the vision, through which they had passed who now

stood upon the shore of it; and they suppose the glass to represent the frail nature of this world; and the fire, the mixture of calamity and misery to which they had been exposed, before they arrived at the

mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, singing the harp to God.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all na-

like, the sea in Solomon's temple; and, it was so irradiated with the reflection of that light which fell upon it from the throne of God, that its waves seemed mingled with fire. And those who overcame the beast,<sup>b</sup> and his image, and stedfastly refused, though at the expence of their possessions and lives, amidst so many who were devoted to him, to receive his mark, [and] the number of his name, I saw standing by the sea of glass, having the harps of God in their hands; with which they were celebrating his praises, for that powerful presence and assistance which had rendered them victorious. And they sung the song of Moses, the faithful and beloved servant of God, and the song of Jesus the Lamb, who had bought them with his blood.<sup>c</sup> They celebrated the triumph they had gained over the proud enemy, with a joy like that with which Israel of old, at the Red Sea, celebrated the destruction of the haughty and cruel Egyptians, by the immediate and glorious interposition of the Divine power, saying, "Great and wonderful [are] thy works, both of judgment and of mercy, O Lord God Almighty; nor dost thou use thine almighty power to oppress any, the meanest of thy creatures; on the contrary, perfectly righteous and true [are] all thy ways and administrations, O King of saints, who art thyself supremely holy, as well as powerful. Who should not fear thee O Lord, and glorify thy great and adorable name? because [thou] only [art] holy; and, in thy presence, the holiness of all other beings disappears, as

SECT. XVIII.  
Rev. XV. 2.

state of security and happiness in which they then were. Many other interpretations have also been given. But the consideration of what I have said elsewhere, of the reference to the scenery of the temple, determined me to the interpretation I have preferred.

<sup>b</sup> Overcame the beast? It is, in the original, *καταβηκεν*, which Dr. Clarke would translate, out of the midst of the beast; that is, adhering stedfastly to the true religion, in the midst of an idolatrous and corrupt nation. See his Post. Serim. Vol. III. p. 69.

<sup>c</sup> Song, &c. — and of the Lamb.] *καὶ αὐτοὶ ᾄδουσιν* — Made, upon the con-

version of all nations from *abslity*, they sung a song of congratulation to Moses and Jesus, whose doctrine had so directly opposed it. Made on Luke XI. 2. But I think this a very low interpretation. Whoever diligently observes the contents of the song of Moses, Exod. xv. will find many expressions finely adapted to the occasion here supposed. And if it were true, as Maimonides tells us, that the song of Moses was sung daily in the temple-service, it may be considered as a beautiful illustration of this circumstance, agreeable to the general plan pursued in these visions.

SECT. "unworthy to be mentioned or remembered.

XVIII. "Surely all nations shall come and worship before thee, in token of the humblest adoration,

Rev. "because thy righteous judgments are already

XV. 4. "in many instances made manifest, and are

"about to be manifested in a yet more illustrious degree."

And after this I saw; and behold, the temple of the tabernacle, in which was the ark of the testimony, was opened again in heaven: the most holy place, which, since the vision I before described, had been veiled again, being now sub-

jected to my view. And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues already mentioned, came out of the inner apartment of the temple, as from the immediate presence of God; and like the High Priest on the day of his most sacred ministration, they were clothed with pure and shining linen [garments;] only with this difference, that whereas he had on this day only his linen girdle on, and continued in that dress till the time of the evening sacrifice, they were girded about the breasts with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four living creatures, which I have so often mentioned, gave to the seven angels, seven golden vials, or censers, full of the wrath of the great and blessed God, who liveth for ever and ever; and therefore is to be regarded as the most formidable enemy, as well as the most

desirable friend, to immortal beings. And agreeably to that wonderful event, which happened when God first took possession of the tabernacle, and of the temple, (Exod. xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10; 2 Chron. v. 14; Isa. vi. 4;) the temple was full of smoke;<sup>d</sup> which came from the glory of God, and from the symbol of his power. And no one could enter into the temple, till the seven plagues, which were signified by the vials of the seven angels were finished; and, till they had emptied them by the Divine

Chap. command. And I then heard a great voice  
xvi. 1. out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, whom

tions shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles,

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

CHAP. XVI. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the se-

<sup>d</sup> And agreeable to that wonderful event, &c.] Indeed it appears most surprising, and worthy of greater notice than has generally been taken of it, that the

blessed God should thus, on the consecration of the temple, possess it alone, and drive out, as it were, even the favourable tokens of his majestic presence

ven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

I have described above, *Go, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God*, with which you are charged; upon the earth; for his patience will no longer endure the provocations they are intended to punish.

SECT. XVIII.  
Rev. XVI. 1.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

*And the first angel, in obedience to this Divine injunction, went forth, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there was a malignant and grievous ulcer, which broke out in large and dreadful sores, upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and them who worshipped his image, and they were extremely tormented with it, and found it incurable.* (Compare Exod. ix. 8—10.)

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became a mass of blood, and putrefaction, like that of a dead man; and every living soul [that was] in the sea died; the fish were immediately destroyed, and the sea appeared a most gloomy and terrible spectacle.* (Compare Exod. vii. 20.)

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

*And the third angel bore a commission to spread the same terrible calamity over all the fresh waters; and, accordingly he poured forth his vial on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, and they also became blood; as the sea*

[*First vial.*] Mr. Lowman supposes, that this *third* period of the *vials*, reveals the state of the church and providence in the times of the last head of the Roman governments, represented by the *beast*, for 1260 years, from about A. D. 756, to its final overthrow about A. D. 2016; and he interprets each vial of some signal judgment upon the papal kingdom; supposing the five first already to be poured out, and the two others to be future. But, I must own myself not to be entirely satisfied, whether this supposition be just, (though I am rather inclined to think it is,) or whether all the following representations do not refer to events yet future, and describe the supernatural plagues to be inflicted on the papal kingdom, in its last days. Mr. Pyle interprets the first vial, of the abandoned degeneracy of the popish clergy. Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers it to the great commotions in the whole empire, under the family of Charls the Great; by which that family became extinct, and the em-

pire and the crown of France, were transferred to other families. A. D. 870, to A. D. 988. And he shews by what intrigues the popes endeavoured to weaken and diminish the imperial power, and serve their own ambitious designs; which proved a painful sore, and were the cause of innumerable mischiefs to Europe, and especially to Italy. During this period, the Normans invaded and plundered France, the Saracens ravaged Italy, and the Hungarians the western parts of Germany and Italy.

[*Second vial.*] Mr. Pyle, and Mr. Lowman, agree in referring this to the great effusion of blood in the holy wars, to recover Jerusalem from the Saracens. This romantic project was set on foot by the pope, pursued by the emperor, the king of France, our king Richard, and other princes, and many prelates; and about two millions lost their lives in the several expeditions; from A. D. 1040, to A. D. 1190. And this appears to me a very probable interpretation.



- sect. had done on pouring out the vial of the former  
 xviii angel. *And I heard the angel of the waters,*<sup>g</sup> 5 And I heard the  
 Rev. who seemed to be appointed to have the care of the angel of the waters  
 XVI. 5. them, instead of repining at what was done, say, 'Thou art righteous,  
 adoring the hand of God in it, and saying, Most O Lord, which  
*righteous art thou, O Lord, who art, and who art, and wast, and shalt be; because*  
*thou hast judged these, and executed such awful vengeance thou hast judged*  
 upon them. Justly dost thou make these per- thus :  
 secuting and wicked countries the scene of such  
 desolating judgments, *because they have poured shed the blood of*  
*forth the blood of thy saints, and even of thy saints and prophets,*  
*prophets, like water; and it hath flowed in a and thou hast given*  
 crimson stream, till their rivers have been dyed them blood to drink ;  
 with it. *And, accordingly, thou madest them for they are worthy.*  
 read their crime in their punishment, and *hast*  
*given them blood to drink, for they are worthy*  
 of it, worthy to find such horrors as these, when-  
 ever they look for refreshment and comfort.  
 7 *And I heard another angel, whose voice seemed*  
 to come from the altar, saying, *Yea, O Lord God*  
*Almighty, it is indeed thus; true and righteous*  
 [are] *all thy judgments.* Heaven adores the  
 equity of thy proceeding; and the most impious  
 inhabitants of earth, or hell, shall not be able to  
 find any thing to object against them, even  
 when they have the appearance of the greatest  
 severity.

[*Angel of the waters.*] From this text, compared with chap. xiv. 18. some have inferred, that there are certain intellectual beings which preside over the several elements of water and fire; and, by consequence of earth and air.

[*Thou art holy.*] I follow those copies, which read it, *καὶ ὁ ἅγιος*; whereas others have it, *ὁ ἁγιωμένος*, as in other places of this book.

[*Third vial.*] Some interpret this of the persecution of the church of Bohemia. (See Mr. Pyle in loc.) But this by no means suits the act of adoration, ver. 5, 6. It seems to refer to calamities to be brought on some parts of the papal kingdom. According to the order of time, Mr. Lowman supposes this to refer to the bloody wars between the Guelphs and Gibellines, or the papal and imperial factions whereby the popes were driven out

of Italy into France; from A. D. 1200, to A. D. 1571. During this period, both these parties had joined in many persecutions, and a violent one raged against the Albigenses; the inquisition was begun about A. D. 1216; and the council of Lateran established these severe and cruel methods of supporting the papacy. And *God gave them also blood to drink*, (ver. 6.) for a violent contest arose between the papal and imperial parties, about the right of presenting to ecclesiastical preferments, so that almost all the cities in Italy were engaged in civil wars, and great multitudes destroyed. In A. D. 1282, all the French in Sicily were massacred. Thus were they, who *shed the blood of the saints*, punished by civil contentions and bloodshed. And, on the whole, this seems to be the most probable and satisfactory interpretation.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us now raise our eyes and our hearts above the low and sordid scenes of mortality, to those happy and exalted spirits sect. XVIII. who are described, as standing before the crystal sea, with golden harps in their hands. Let us attentively hearken to those broken and imperfect echoes of the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, Verse 1, 2, 3 which a gracious God causes to descend, as it were, to this world of ours, and which sometimes sweetly mingle themselves with the clamour of strife, with the din of folly, with the groans of misery. Happy and glorious is their condition now, who are freed from all these evils, and who triumph over all their enemies; whom, as it was said to Israel of the Egyptians, *having beheld, they shall see them no more, for ever*: (Exod. xiv. 13.) They are now acknowledging their great Deliverer, singing everlasting praises to his name, and celebrating the wonders of his works, and the righteousness and truth of all his ways. *O Lord God Almighty, O thou King of saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy holy name? Let the nations come, and worship in thy presence; let them pay thee their humble reverence and homage, before the vials of thy wrath are poured out; those vials, which, terrible as their contents are, the benevolent spirits of heaven prepare themselves, at thy command, to pour forth with pleasure; Chap. XVI. 1. applauding in their responsive hymns, thy righteous judgments, even when the sorest and most dreadful plagues torment the worshippers of the beast and his image; even when their seas, and their rivers are turned into blood. Whatever be the calamities, whether past or future, to which any of these particulars may refer, surely they are big with terror to those wretches who, on any pretence, are pouring forth the blood of thy prophets and thy saints. They are worthy of having blood given them to drink, and accordingly thou hast a dreadful draught in reserve for them. And, though some of them may have laid down their hoary heads in peace, which, we might rather have expected, would have been brought to the grave with blood, the day of thy vengeance will surely come: a vengeance so terrible, that nothing but a zeal for thy violated law, and thine injured gospel, would make the very sight of it supportable to those whose cause shall then be pleaded, and whose blood shall be visited on their tormentors and murderers.*

## S E C T. XIX.

*The pouring forth of the four last vials, and the awful events they produce; with the incorrigible obstinacy of the sinners on whom this vengeance is executed. Rev. XVI. 8, to the end.*

## REVELATION XVI. 8.

SECT.  
XIX.  
Rev  
XVI. 8.

AND the three former angels having thus poured forth their vials on the earth, and sea, and the rivers of water, *the fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun;*<sup>a</sup> and, in consequence of that, an extraordinary power was given to it, to scorch men with an intolerable heat, so that they seemed, as it were, to live in the very fire itself. And men were scorched with sudden calentures, and with great and unsufferable fierceness of heat; and yet, instead of giving glory to the great Author of these awful chastisements, which afforded them so lively an idea of everlasting burnings, as if they had already been inhabitants of the world of despair, *they blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues.* And the continuance of their torments did not subdue their hearts, but they still persisted, as with a diabolical obstinacy, *and repented not, to give glory to him,* by a confession of their sins, by seeking his mercy, and returning to his obedience. (Compare Isa. xxiv. 6.)

10 And as these vials had greatly affected the kingdom of the beast, the next came still nearer

REV. XVI. 8.  
AND the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth

<sup>a</sup> Fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun.] Some interpret this of the quarrel between the popes and emperors, in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. See Mr. Pyle in loc. Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers it to the long and bloody wars in Italy, France, Germany, and Spain, occasioned by a schism in the papacy; (from A. D. 1378, to A. D. 1530.) there being three popes, in three lines of succession, at the same time. During this period the Turks took Constantinople, and put an end to the eastern empire. And some suppose there is a further reference to hot and burning seasons which should destroy the

fruits of the earth, and occasion pestilential disorders; and historians inform us, that this was the case in the time supposed to be here referred to; particularly by means of the sweating sickness, which began in England, and spread wide into other countries, particularly Germany, A. D. 1517; and again A. D. 1529. But that *they repented not*, (ver. 9,) is evident from the war commenced against the Bohemians; the infamous conduct of the council of Constance, in burning John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, in violation of the public faith, and establishing that scandalous doctrine, *that faith is not to be kept with heretics*, &c. &c.

angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

to him; for, *the fifth angel poured forth his vial upon the throne of the beast itself;*<sup>b</sup> and his kingdom was darkened, so that his unhappy subjects, from whom he had so long veiled the light of God's word, and of his favour, had not the benefit of the solar rays, either to guide or cheer them. (Compare Ezek. xxxii. 8.) And yet at the same time, the secret fire kindled in their veins by the former scorching heat continued; and they gnawed their tongues for the extremity of the pain and anguish which they felt; And they still blasphemed the great God, the tremendous Majesty of heaven as well as earth, for their pains and their ulcers, which the scorching heat had excited; and they repented not of their wicked works, whereby they had awakened his just indignation.

SECT.  
XIX.  
Rev.  
XVI. 10.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

And the sixth angel poured forth his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and its water, wide and rapid as the stream had been, was dried up immediately, that a way might be prepared for the march of the kings from the rising of the sun, who appeared in vision as coming to the borders of it, with all their armies, to pour forth destruction upon the beast and his kingdom.

<sup>b</sup> Fifth vial.] Mr. Pyle interprets this of the perplexity occasioned to the see of Rome, by removing the seat of it to Avignon, and the schism between the popes. But this prophecy seems to refer to a later period. Mr Lowman's interpretation is more probable, who refers it to the protestant reformation, and the confirmation of it by the principal states of Europe, notwithstanding all the attempts of the pope, and in opposition to the papal authority. From A. D. 1560, to A. D. 1650. During this period, several nations renounced subjection to the pope, and have continued free to this day, and, in other nations, his power has been greatly abridged and restrained. This event gave great vexation to the popes, and their adherents; occasioned invasions, assassinations, massacres, and bloody wars; as the civil wars in France, the wars in Germany about the Reformation, the war between Spain and the United Provinces, the Spanish invasion of England, and the powder plot, the massacre of Paris, &c. Yet all proved unsuccessful to prevent the establishment of the reformed religion. And that then

repented not of their deeds, (ver 11.) is evident from the instances of their rage and cruelty already mentioned, and which they take care to repeat whenever they have power; and especially from the edicts of the council of Trent, (from A. D. 1542, to A. D. 1562,) which, instead of diminishing or relaxing, increased and confirmed the corruptions of popery, and condemned all doctrines tending to reformation.

<sup>c</sup> River Euphrates.] It appears to me, that this implies the invasion of the papal kingdom from the east; but, as I believe the vision not yet accomplished, I freely confess, that it is involved in those clouds and darkness which I am not able to penetrate. Mr. Pyle explains it of the conquest of the eastern Christians, by the growing power of the Ottoman house, and the contempt of popery in some parts of the west. But this part of the prophecy seems to refer to an event, much later; and, like the rest, to denote some judgment on the papal kingdom, to happen, probably, between A. D. 1700, and A. D. 1900.

SECT.  
XIX.  
Rev.  
XVI. 13.

*And, as I saw the dragon standing in my presence, with the beast and the false prophet near him, as the great abettors of his kingdom, which was threatened by this invasion, I had an intimation given me of the various efforts they should make for the preservation of it: [and] out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,<sup>d</sup> [there came] evidently three animals, which expressed unclean spirits, being represented by creatures like frogs: For these are the spirits of demons, whose design it is to impose upon mankind by the most artful stratagems, and pretences of working miracles, by which they attempted to support the kingdom they had raised; and indeed, it seemed they did even enchant whole nations; for they were permitted by God, to go forth to the kings of that part of the earth where the seat of the beast was; and, indeed, his territory was so extensive, that it might be said, they went through the whole world; and they operated so powerfully, as to bring them together, to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty, in which he was secretly determined to pour forth his vengeance upon them.* And, as this last effort of this infernal agent would be a signal trial of the faith and constancy of the saints, in order the better to fortify them against it, I heard a voice which I understood to be that of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, *Behold I come suddenly and unexpectedly, as a thief, that surprises a sleeping family: blessed [is] he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,<sup>e</sup> that they may not suddenly be snatched from him, and he may not be forced to walk naked, so that men should see his shame.* Let my servants, therefore, guard against these sudden

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

<sup>d</sup> False prophet.] As the false prophet is here joined with the beast, and also in chap. xix. 20, and there said to work miracles before the beast. See sect. xvi. note b, c.

<sup>e</sup> Keepeth his garments.] Dr Lighfoot thinks here is an allusion to what that Jewish officer, called the man of the mountain, that is, of the house of the Lord, used to do, when taking his round in the temple to examine the watch; if he met

with any asleep, he had a liberty to set fire to his garments. Perhaps, in this case, the person might be obliged to appear in the fragments of his burnt garments the next day, which would be a great disgrace. See his Works, Vol. I. p. 919. According to Ainsworth, (on Numb. xviii. 4, 5,) they were beaten by the provost, and their garments were taken away and burnt.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone the weight of a talent.

surprises, which during this time of danger and alarm may frequently happen. And the army appearing against the saints, as was observed above, *He*, that is, God, by the secret conduct of his providence, so disposed things, that he gathered them together into a certain place, [which is] called in the Hebrew language, Armageddon, or the mountain of Megiddo, because was to be a place more remarkable for slaughter than Megiddo had ever been.

And when they were there assembled, the seventh angel poured forth his vial into the air, and there came forth a great voice from the temple of heaven, even from the very throne of God himself, saying, "It is now done, the great work is just completing." And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was also together with them a great earthquake, to add new horror to the scene, such as there had not been from the time that men were upon the earth; even such, and so great an earthquake, quite unequalled in history or observation. And the great city was immediately divided into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell down. And thus it appeared, that Babylon the great came into remembrance before God, to give her the long-threatened cup of the wine of his fiercest wrath, in which all the most dreadful ingredients of vengeance were, as it were, mingled together, like poignant poison in the strongest wine, to give it the greater power and efficacy. And the whole face of nature was thrown into such a consternation by means of this grand event, that every island fled away, and the mountains were found no more. And a great and violent storm of hail, the stones of which were as of the weight of a talent, descended from heaven upon men, so as to dash in pieces the stoutest heroes, how well soever they

SECT.  
XIX.

Rev.  
XVI. 10.

{ *He gathered them.* } This seems a memorable circumstance; they were the dragon's army, yet God assembled them. Such oblique intimations of the interposition of Providence, are wonderfully instructive, and they are scattered up and down in many places of the sacred writings—That Megiddo had been a place

remarkable for slaughter, See Judges v. 19; 2 Kings ix. 27; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22. Compare Zech. xii. 11. To express the certain destruction that should come upon these antichristian powers, they are described as brought together to this mountain.

SECT. might be armed and defended. *And men, in-* and men blasphemed  
 XIX. stead of being reformed by it, *blasphemed God* God because of the  
 ~~~~~ so much the more for the plague of the hail; for the plague of the hail;  
 Rev. the plague of it was very great, and brought for the plague there-  
 XVI. 21. of was exceeding  
 along with it a very extensive ruin and desola- great.  
 tion :

## IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER particular events these *vials* might be respective-

- Ver. 1. If intended to represent, they all agree in giving us most awful views of the Divine power and agency over the whole universe. He is able to *scorch* and blast the earth with insufferable heat, to veil it in midnight darkness, to dry up its rivers, or even shake its foundations, so as to throw down, in a moment, the strongest and the proudest cities. From the air he can cause even rivers of ice to descend, sufficient, not only to destroy our frail and tender bodies, but those regular fortifications which are deemed impregnable; turning them into the graves of those who seek and expect protection from them. How worthy is this tremendous Being of our homage and reverence? And yet men near of his awful judgments, and sometimes see and feel them too, and continue unreformed. Even while they are gnawing their tongues through the extremity of pain and anguish, it is possible, that as well as their wounded tongues will give them leave, they may blaspheme the God of heaven, and utter their impotent rage and malice against him. The infernal regions resound with diabolical language: and O, that so many parts of this earth bore no resemblance to them. But let the outrage of the wicked be what it may, God, when he enters into judgment, will overcome. And, though the rage of his enemies engages them to gather themselves together, the event will prove, that it is only as sheep for the slaughter. And, while they are acting in this with the utmost freedom, they are indeed assuaged by him, their own angry passions subserving the purposes of his righteous Providence.
- 15 Let us confide in his word, let us attend to his voice; and, in spite of all our difficulties and dangers, let us do our endeavour, to secure the blessedness of that man, who watcheth, and keepeth his garments; who is always on his guard against every surprise, which might expose him to shame in the presence of his Master, though he should come in ever so unexpected a manner, even like a thief in the night.

[ *Seventh vial* ] This is introductory to the fall of the papal kingdom; and the expressions, verse 19, may only signify, that great numbers should fall by these

awful judgments, which were only introductory to the full and complete ruin afterwards described.

SECT. XX.

In order to let the author into the meaning of the seven vials, he sees a representation of the great harlot sitting upon a mysterious beast, and hears her doomed to destruction by the Divine judgments. Rev. XVII. throughout.

REV. XVII. 1.

REVELATION XVII. 1.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither. I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters.

AND, when all this was done, *one of the seven angels, who had been honoured with bearing the seven vials, the pouring forth of which I have just described, came and spake with me, saying to me. Come, [and] I will shew thee, to what this prophetic scene, which has passed before thy view, principally refers, even the judgment of the great harlot, that sitteth upon many waters, whom thou shalt now see; and observe the terrible vengeance to which she is reserved, though so many people have been corrupted by her, and though she has tyrannized over them in so insolent and unbecoming a manner: Even of her with whom the kings of the earth have so long committed fornication, (compare Isa. xxiii. 17.) and their subjects have been debauched with them; so that, in a manner, all the inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her whoredom, as if they had taken some powerful provocative, to make them doat upon her, and sacrifice every dictate of religion, and reason, and even common sense, to those alluring arts with which she has been tempting them. And he brought me in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman, of an impudent front, and a most imperious and cruel appearance, sitting upon a scarlet beast, fierce and savage; and the beast had gaudy trappings of embroidery upon it, full of blasphemous names, ascribing to itself, and the harlot upon it, properties and glories which belong to God alone; and having also, like the beast which I saw before, (chap. xiii. 1,) seven heads, and ten horns; referring to the hills on which the city, designed by this harlot, stood, and the number of kingdoms subject to its government. And the charms of her person, such as they were,*

SECT. XX.  
XVII. 1

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of name of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns.

And the woman



seer. were set off with all the gorgeous ornaments of the most splendid dress; for, *the woman was clothed with purple, and scarlet, and adorned with*

Rev.  
XVII.

4 *gold and precious stones, and pearls; having also a golden cup in her hand full of that inflaming mixture, by which those who drank of it, were instigated to all the abominations and pollution of her dissolute and abandoned whoredom; that is, those idolatrous practices, which the society of men represented by this infamous woman, had carried to so shameful a height. (Compare Jer.*

li. 7.) But, that she might appear in my eyes as a criminal marked out by God for speedy and dreadful execution, [*she had*] *upon her forehead [her] name, her titles and crimes, written: and the first word was MYSTERY: the great mystery of iniquity, abetted by all the fraud and artifice which can be conceived, is represented by this woman: after which followed these words, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH; the most impudent strumpet that ever appeared upon earth, and the greatest procurer of lewdness that ever*

6 *polluted the face of it. And I saw the woman drunk; and was informed, that it was with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, of which she had gorged vast quantities, and for which she still thirsted impatiently; and seemed to cast her greedy eyes around, as longing for renewed draughts of it. And I wondered, when I saw her, with great amazement,*<sup>a</sup> *as I knew she represented a society that would call itself Christian, and pretend a regard for Jesus and his saints, in the midst of all this cruel persecution of them; and also, for the honour of God among all these unequalled idolatries and immoralities.*

7 *And the angel said unto me, Why dost thou wonder? Hast thou not thyself had intimation of this antichristian sect, and this great apostacy? I will tell thee the secret of the whole matter; the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carries her, which hath, as thou*

*was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.*

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore dost thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the

<sup>a</sup> *Amazement.*] This seems a plain argument, that the society referred to was Christian; for it had been no great

wonder, that a heathen power should persecute.

seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. These seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings,

seest, the seven heads, and the ten horns. The beast which thou formerly sawest, was, and is not;<sup>b</sup> that is, God will cut short its reign, and he will indeed ascend, as has been represented, out of the bottomless pit, and go suddenly into destruction; and the inhabitants of the earth, (whose names, as I said, are not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world,) shall wonder, seeing the beast, who, for a little while, was, and is not; that is, he shall quickly be overthrown, though he is to appear for a while, and perform such great wonders.--

Here [is] a proof of the understanding that hath wisdom; for the utmost sagacity may here be put to the trial. But this I will observe, to guide the inquiring mind, and I am commissioned by God to give this key to the mystery, that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains, on which that celebrated city is built, on which the infamous woman I have been describing, sitteth. And there are seven kings, or forms of government,<sup>c</sup> five of them are fallen, and one is, [and] the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must endure for a little time, but will soon be destroyed and swallowed up.

And the beast, of whom I said, that he was, and is not, he is the eighth, and he is of the seven;<sup>d</sup> he ariseth out of the remainder of this people, but at length goes into destruction, as the rest, though his reign shall be so much longer than any of his predecessors. And the ten horns

which thou sawest, are ten kings, or kingdoms,

<sup>b</sup> The beast—was, and is not.} This seems to intimate, that the persecuting power of Pagan Rome, should for a while revive in Pagan Rome, and, ere long, be utterly destroyed.

<sup>c</sup> Seven—forms of government.} Some reckon these to be the Roman kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, and popes. But I much question, whether this be a right solution.--Mr. Lowman supposes here is an intimation that the seventh form of government was not to begin till the imperial power was destroyed. And, this last may, on some account, be called the seventh, and for other reasons, the eighth head of government, as the exarchate of Ravenna was in some sense, a new form of government,

and yet hardly so distinct and proper a form, as to be reckoned for a different head. Compare chap. xii. v. note d.

<sup>d</sup> He is the eighth, &c.} Mr. Fleming understands this of the government of the Ostrogoths in Rome; who, though they were the seventh head in number, yet were not of the seven, that is, such as the six first and the eighth, because they were foreigners, whereas the others were natives. Flein. on the first Res. p. 106, 107. This exact prophecy, he says, is a great confirmation of the Divine authority of this book. Limborch understands it of the German Emperor, who was only titular king of Rome. See the preceding note

SECT. XX.  
Rev. XVII. 8.

# 476 *They shall make war with the Lamb; but he overcome.*

SECT. XX. *which shall arise out of the ruin of the former state, and shall all, for a while, be dependent upon, and subject to the beast; they have not, indeed, yet received their kingdom, but they shall receive authority from the beast as kings, though greatly under his limitation and controul, to reign for one hour, for a certain limited time.*

Rev.  
XVII. 12

13 And however *these* princes may be dissuited in their political interests, which may, in some respects, contradict each other, yet, with respect to their unhappy prejudices in religion, and idolatrous inclinations, there shall be a surprising agreement between them; and they *have one mind* and sentiment in that respect, *and shall consent to deliver over their own power and authority to the beast*, to be employed by him for the advancement of his interest; so that they shall act but as his viceroys, even in their own territories.

14 *These also shall presume to make war with the Lamb; and the consequence may easily be conjectured; for the Lamb, who bears such magnificent titles, and who hath already triumphed over all the powers of hell, shall undoubtedly overcome them, and triumph over them; for he is indeed, (what some vain mortals have impiously and arrogantly called themselves,) Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, the supreme Ruler of all governors and magistrates upon the face of the earth, to whom dominion over them belongs, by the strictest and most inalienable right; and those that are with him, and have the honour to fight under his banner, are not only called to arm themselves in this glorious cause, but chosen to act in the service, and they are faithful to the engagements into which they enter.* All these were the words of that angel who was commissioned to instruct me

which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and they that are with him shall call him, and shall be faithful.

15 And he saith,

\* Called, chosen, and faithful.] Here may very possibly be, the ingenious author of the Christian Warfare has represented, in his learned and beautiful remarks on this text, a reference to the military custom of the Greeks; used to call the people together any expedition was designed, out of which there were some chosen to serve in the action intended, who swore fidelity to their leader. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 10, note.) But I can by

no means suppose that this is the uniform idea to be annexed to the word *chosen* in scripture, any more than I can suppose the term *called*, always to signify invited to a feast, which is an idea another ingenious writer has endeavoured to lead his readers to affix to it. The truth is, both signify something much more general, though both may be applied, in particular cases, in the limited sense contended for Compare Isa. xxxvi. 2, 6, 7.

unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whole sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

in the meaning of an appearance which had thrown me into such amazement. *And he proceeded, and said further unto me, The waters which thou sawest, on which the spacious, but abandoned harlot sat, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,* a vast multitude of different nations and languages, who shall consent for a long time, to those degenerate forms of religion which she shall introduce. *And the ten*

SECT.  
XX.  
Rev.  
XVII.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire;

*horns which thou sawest on the savage beast, these* are the kingdoms subject to her. But the princes of them shall at length turn against her; so that she shall, as it were, be thrown down, and gored by the creature that has so tamely and patiently carried her: for they shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked: they shall strip her of all those ornaments which they have profusely lavished away upon her; and they shall be ready, as it were, in the transport of their indignation and zeal, to eat her very flesh, and shall burn her with fire. They shall be bent upon destroying their stupid idolatry, and all the monuments of it, and turn their keenest resentment upon the abettors and instruments of such cruel persecution as they have exercised:

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled

*For God hath given it into their hearts,* by a strong and powerful impression, to execute his counsel and sentence, and they shall agree in it, even to perform one purpose. *And he hath left them under a fatal infatuation,* in opposition to true policy, as well as virtue and religion, so as to give their kingdoms to the beast, till the words of God be fulfilled; and then their minds shall be turned, and their eyes opened, and they shall ruin this oppressive society more eagerly than they ever established it. *And the woman which*

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth

*thou sawest, is the great imperial city, that ruleth over the kings of the earth,* and now disposes of their crowns at her pleasure, none daring to make war against her.

[I recite his sentence.] We render it to fulfil his will. Hence some have inferred, that it is the will of God, that heretics should be cut off. But it is sufficiently known to what extremities people are driven to find any thing that looks like an argument for persecution in the New

Testament, when they are forced to have recourse to a text for this purpose, which only proves that God had, in his wise and holy counsel, determined that the idolatrous and persecuting anti-christian power should be destroyed.

## IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. EASILY might we have apprehended, that *Rome* had been here  
 XX. designed, though it had not been so particularly described by its  
 situation on *seven hills*, or by the empire it then possessed over  
 Verse all the kingdoms of the world. The harlot might be sufficiently  
 9, 18 distinguished by her names of blasphemy, by her cup of inchant-  
 3 ment, by her titles, *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,*  
 4, 5 *THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINA-*  
 6 *TIONS OF THE EARTH.* Yea, she might be known by  
 this single character, of having made herself drunk with the blood  
 of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And is  
 it *heathen Rome*, to whom these characters are most remarkably  
 applicable? The apostle would not then have wondered with so  
 great admiration, that idolatry and persecution should prevail,  
 where the former had raged for so many ages, and the latter al-  
 most from the very beginning of Christianity, and to such a de-  
 gree, in the days of Nero, who, as their own historian tells us,  
 had, thirty years before this, added mockeries and insults to tor-  
 ment, that Christians were dressed up in the skins of wild beasts,  
 and so exposed to be worried on the theatre: a method which  
 hath, indeed, figuratively speaking, been every where practised,  
 and must be practised, if Christianity is to be made ridiculous or  
 odious. But, the true occasion of the apostle's astonishment,  
 was, that *Rome* professing Christianity, *Rome* setting up for the  
 head of the Christian world, should have emulated and exceed-  
 ed any Pagan city, and even itself in its Pagan state, in its ido-  
 latries, and in its cruelties. And this is a fact indeed wonderful.  
 But these are the secret counsels of God, even those counsels  
 which are to us unsearchable. Nevertheless, the beauty and  
 17 glory of them shall at length be apparent. The kings of the earth,  
 though, like *Nebuchadnezzar*, (Isa. x. 7.) they meant it not, are  
 now fulfilling the plan of Divine Providence; a plan that shall at  
 length appear wise and harmonious, though the permission of all  
 these absurdities and horrors make a part of it. And when the  
 words of God are fulfilled, they who with one mind have given  
 20 their power and strength to the beast, in order to support the har-  
 lot, shall be as unanimous in hating her, and making her desolate  
 and naked, shall be ready to devour her flesh, and consume her  
 21 in her own fires. Fierce and savage as the beast may at present  
 appear, its war with the Lamb shall be utterly in vain; for the  
 Lamb is always victorious, and will assert his grand imperial  
 titles, *LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS.* May  
 • we all list under his banner! May we not only be called, but  
 chosen and faithful, faithful even to death; since all the rage of  
 22 men, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, if it were united  
 against us, could not prevent his giving us a crown of victory,  
 and a part in his everlasting triumphs!

SECT. XXI.

*A sublime description of the fall of Babylon, and an account of the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Rev. XVIII. 1. throughout.*

REV. XVIII. 1.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily, with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive

REVELATION XVIII. 1.

AND after this, I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had, in his countenance and appearance, the signatures of great power; and the earth was enlightened with his glory, which spread a vivid lustre all around him, reflected from every neighbouring object. And 2

he cried with great might [and] a loud voice of triumphant joy, in the words of Isaiah, (chap. xxi. 9,) saying, *It is fallen, it is fallen,<sup>a</sup> even Babylon the great; and what was prophesied concerning the celebrated seat of the Chaldean empire, shall presently be verified in this detested city; so that we may already say, it is become the habitation of demons, (as desolate places were reputed to be,) and the hold of every unclean spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, (Isa. xiii. 21; Jer. l. 39; li. 37.) Be- 3 cause she hath caused all the nations to drink of the intoxicating and inflaming wine of her raging and insatiable whoredom; and all the kings of the earth have committed whoredom with her, and the merchants of the earth have traded with her, and been enriched by the abundance of her luxuries.<sup>b</sup>* And I then heard another voice 4

from heaven, saying to the remainder of faithful souls which were yet in Babylon, *Come ye out from the midst of her, O my people, separate yourselves from this accursed society, that ye may not be partakers with her in her sins, which are so polluting and ensnaring; and that ye may not,*

<sup>a</sup> *Is fallen.*] This is still the language of prophecy, expressing what shall certainly and speedily come to pass: for verse the fourth shews, that, in strictness of speech, Babylon was yet to be considered as *standing*.

<sup>b</sup> *Luxuries.*] The word *εὐφροσύνη*, seems to signify such *luxury* of diet as cherries, and disposes to acts of un-

*chastity*; and may well represent the manner in which the Roman clergy have pampered themselves, and the effects it has produced, to the scandal of the Christian profession, in the eyes of all the world, as well as the idolatries which have been established and maintained to support that *luxury*. Compare 1 Tim. v. 11 and the note <sup>1b</sup>

SECT.

XXI.

Rev.

XVIII. 1

- SECT. by a fatal consequence, *partake of her plagues* not of her plagues.  
 XXI. too, which those who share her sins must expect  
 Rev. to share, whatever their former profession may  
 XVIII. have been. *Because her sins have followed up to*  
*heaven with their clamours, and her unrighteous*  
*actions are come up in remembrance before that*  
*God, who will not fail severely to visit her for*  
 6 *them. And now, O my people, give her, as she*  
*also has given to you, and recompense to her double,*  
*according to her works; for God will plead your*  
*cause for you. in the cup of terror, which she*  
*has mingled for those whom she was not able*  
*to seduce and debauch, mingle her a double quan-*  
 7 *tity of those poisonous ingredients: In full pro-*  
*portion to the degree in which she hath for so*  
*many ages, made ostentation of her glory, and liv-*  
*ed in luxury, inflict upon her torment and grief,*  
*and vengeance; because she has audaciously said*  
*in her heart, while the Divine threatenings have*  
*been sounding in her very ears, I sit as a queen,*  
*enthroned above the reach of adversity, and I*  
*am not a desolate widow, as it hath been pre-*  
*tended I should be; and I shall not see sorrow.*  
 8 (Compare Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.) *Therefore, in one*  
*day shall her plagues come upon her, even upon*  
*this impious and abominable city, death, and*  
*mourning, and famine, which shall all unite*  
*their efforts against her; and she shall be burnt*  
*with fire. for strong [is] the Lord God who judges*  
*her; and all her boasted strength will, in his*  
 9 *presence, be weakness and confusion. And the*  
*other kings of the earth, who shall not be ac-*  
*tive in the execution before described, but still*  
*retain their affection for her, even the remain-*  
*der of those, who have committed fornication,*  
*and lived in luxury with her, shall mourn over*  
*her, and lament for her, when they shall see the*  
*flames of wrath kindle about her, and the smoke*  
*of her burning, like that of Sodom in the day*  
*of its conflagration, ascending up to heaven.*  
 10 *They shall see it, standing afar off for fear of*  
*her torment, saying, Woe, woe, and alas, O thou*  
*great city, Babylon, the strong city! well may*  
*we lament over thee! for in one hour thy judg-*  
*ment is come, and thy desolation is as sudden*  
 11 *as this is dreadful and entire. And the mer-*  
*chants of the earth, those who enriched them-*
- 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.
- 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.
- 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.
- 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.
- 9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.
- 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.
- 11 And the merchants of the earth

shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more

\* 12 The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits the thy soul loved after are departed, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

selves by her expensive magnificence, *shall wail and lament over her*, out of a regard to their own interest, if not to her's; *because no one any longer shall buy their wares*, with which they had loaded so many gallant vessels that carried on a traffic with her: They shall lament,

that so noble a vend for all the delicacies of a pompous and luxurious life, is lost; and that they can no longer thus dispose of *the ladings of gold, and silver, and every precious stone, and pearls, and of the fine linen of Egypt, and the purple of Sidon, and the silk of the eastern countries, and the scarlet, and every odouriferous wood*, that the plantations of Arabia, or the coast of India, could boast; and every curiously wrought vessel of ivory, and every vessel of most precious wood, in value exceeding even that, and all the utensils of brass, and of iron, and of marble, with which the houses of the rich, and of the great, have been furnished. No longer shall they there find a market for rich and fragrant commodities; for cinnamon, and perfume, and myrrh, and incense, nor for the more necessary and important supplies of wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and kine, and sheep and horses, and chariots, and slaves: and their yet more infamous traffic for the lives, and the very souls of men, which they sacrificed to their avarice, and their treachery, shall cease. And thou, O Babylon, shalt join thy cry with theirs;

for all the fruits, which thy soul desired, and for which alone thy degenerate nature had any remaining relish, are gone from thee, and all thy delicious and splendid things are departed from thee; and the loss is final as well as entire; for thou shalt never find them any more. I repeat it again, the merchants of all these [commodities,] who were enriched by her, shall stand afar off, in a mixture of terror and grief, for fear of her torment, weeping, and mourning<sup>d</sup>, but absolutely

SECT.

XXI.

Rev.

XVIII.

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<sup>c</sup> Slaves.] The Greek word *συνετα* has plainly this signification. Compare Tobit x. 9.

<sup>d</sup> If weeping and mourning.] There is in all this so evident a reference to the lamentation over Tyre, described by Ezekiel, (chap. xxv.) that I suppose few

readers can fail to take notice of it. Compare Isa. xlii. 1, 7, 14, & sur. Some have interpreted many of these passages, as referring to the circumstances of Popish worship, and the trade of their priests; as ver. 11. to relics, pardons, and indulgences; ver. 12. to their images; and



SECT. incapable of giving her any relief; smiting on  
XXI. their breasts, *And saying, Alas, alas, for*

Rev.  
XVIII.

*the great, elegant and magnificent city, that was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!*

16 *For, who can sufficiently lament this sad instance of the uncertainty of all human things, when he sees, that, in one hour, all these great riches are laid waste, and made desolate?* And this sad scene was represented to me in a lively vision; and every pilot, and every one of the ship's company, and the mariners, and all that bestow their labour upon the sea, stood afar off from the flames of the burning city,

17 *And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning ascend in such thick columns to heaven, What [city is] like to the great city, so long unequalled in its glory, and now in its ruin?*

18 *And they seemed like men in the greatest agony of distress, and cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping, and mourning, saying, Alas, alas, for the great city, by whose magnificent expences, arising from her profusion, and elegance, and grandeur, all that had ships in the sea were enriched, so that she alone was sufficient, as it were, to maintain the merchandise of the world; for she is made desolate in one hour, to a degree that we should have imagined utterly impossible.*

20 But while they were thus lamenting their own loss and her's, I was affected in another manner, and could not forbear crying out in my own heart, *Rejoice over her, O thou just avenging heaven, and ye holy apostles, and prophets,* who look down from your abodes of glory, on so wonderful and interesting a scene. Take your part in the sacred triumph; *for on your account, God has pronounced sentence upon her; he hath adjudged her to righteous destruction, for her*

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches are come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city?

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles, and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her

the furniture of their churches and chapels, and the variety of rich dresses for their images and priests: ver. 13. to the incense used at their altars. ver. 22. to the musical instruments used in their worship: and ver. 23. to the vast numbers of lamps burning before their idolatrous altars; and the like.—But it seems rather to centre in one view, the loss of every

thing valuable and desirable, and the utter ruin of this magnificent city.

*Apostles.*] Nothing can be *lively* than this *apostrophe*; in which the apostles, though honoured in Rome by so many superstitious and idolatrous rites, are, nevertheless, called upon to *rejoice* in her *destruction*.

opposition to his kingdom, and for the injuries done to you, who with ardent and unwearied zeal, endeavour to establish and promote it.

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XXI.  
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21

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

And, as soon as I had uttered this in correspondence to the scene which had been represented of old, with relation to the great seat of the Chaldean empire, (Jerem. li. 64.) a strong angel took a stone, like a great millstone; and, with a vigorous and rapid motion, hurled it into the sea, saying, Thus shall Babylon the great city, unequal as the production of this event may seem to any human power, be violently hurled away by the almighty arm of an avenging God, and sink into the depths of destruction; so that it shall never be found any more.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee, and no craftsman of what soever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.

And the 22 harmonious sound of harpers, and other musicians, and those who sound the flute, and the trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee; and every artificer of every curious trade employed for the accommodations and ornaments of life, shall no more be found in thee, O Babylon, nor shall the noise of the millstone be heard in thee any more, even to prepare bread for the meanest inhabitant. And the light of a lamp shall

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

no more be seen in thee, to gild thy dark night with its cheerful rays; and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, rejoicing in their new relation, and celebrating the nuptial feast, shall be heard in thee no more; because thy merchants were grandees of the earth, and maintained so shameful a traffic by every dishonest art, and because all the nations were deceived by thy sorceries, and poisoned by thy pernicious practices.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

And, to complete her guilt, as Babylon 24 of old had grown great by the slaughter of Israel, so, in her, who has been here represented, was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints of God, even of all those who were slain upon the earth; for this wicked city exceeded all the rest of the world in cruelties, and might boast

<sup>1</sup> Hurled away.] This the original words, ὁρμαίνω, import; as if falling by its own weight, its fall would not have been rapid enough. From hence Dr. Thomas Burnet infers, in his Theory of the earth, that Rome, being the first, (Compare Deut. xix. 15.) will

be swallowed up in a lake of fire and brimstone, as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Burn Theol. Vol. II. p. 123. Compare Rev. xix. 20.

[ Verse 22, 23.] Compare Isa. xxv. 10; xxxiii. 11; Ezek. xxxv. 13; & xxxviii. 11.

SECT. in the multitudes of the martyrs she had slain,  
 XXI beyond all that had ever gone before her, in  
 such detestable persecutions; and this hath fill-  
 ed up the measure of her iniquities, and plung-  
 ed her into this irrecoverable ruin.

Rev.  
 XVIII.  
 24.

## IMPROVEMENT.

Verse FROM the particular detail which is here given us, of the va-  
 rious commodities in which Babylon traded with its merchants,  
 we may surely take an incidental occasion to reflect upon the  
 rich bounty of Divine Providence, to the children of men, in  
 giving them such a variety of good things, which tend not only  
 to their necessary support, but their ornament and delight. To  
 whatever pernicious purposes vanity and luxury may abuse the  
*silver and gold, the gems and the pearls, the fine linen and silk,*  
*the purple and scarlet, the ivory and marble, the cinnamon and*  
*the myrrh,* as well as the more important blessings of *wheat and*  
*oil, of kine, and sheep and horses,* all are the gifts of God; and,  
 if wisely and properly used, may justly excite our thankfulness  
 to him; and it is on ourselves, and not on him, that we are to  
 charge it, if what should have been for our welfare becomes a  
 trap, and our treasures be turned into idols. Nor is the wise  
 disposition of Providence to be disregarded, in causing many of  
 these things to be the peculiar products of different countries,  
 denying to some what he has given to the rest, that so traffic  
 and commerce may be encouraged, and by it, society and inter-  
 course extended among different nations, and provision made  
 for that spread of Divine knowledge, which had in many instan-  
 ces, been impossible, if human industry, quickened by necessity,  
 and the prospect of gain, had not invented those arts of naviga-  
 tion, to which Great Britain above all other nations, is so much  
 indebted, and without which, indeed, our beautiful and fruitful  
 island had been a desert, inaccessible to men.

But, though this oblique reflection may profitably be made,  
 the great object to which we are directed by this chapter, is the  
 21 certain and final ruin of Babylon, which, how highly soever ex-  
 alted, how superbly soever adorned, how luxuriously soever re-  
 8 galed, shall fall, shall fall as a millstone cast into the sea. Strong  
 is the Lord God, who judgeth her; and it is impossible she can  
 withstand the force of his omnipotent arm. To us has she, in  
 2a metaphorical sense, been the hold of every foul spirit, and the  
 cage of every unclean and hateful bird; and God will make her  
 5 so in another, even in a literal sense, when he shall appear to  
 remember and punish those iniquities, which have reached unto  
 heaven; among which, various and detestable as they have been,  
 24 shedding the blood of the prophets and the saints, must be reck-

oned as most *enormous*. Let no triumph of the antichristian powers, for the present, shake our faith in these most certain and indubitable prophecies; and let that charge never be forgotten, "*Come forth from her, O my people, and be separate.*" Blessed be God, ~~that~~ a separation has been begun, that it has been so long supported, and that so many attempts to bring back God's *Israel* into captivity have been defeated. May the boundaries of the Reformation be extended, may the purity of the reformed churches be more and more advanced, and all remainders of superstition, persecution, and imposition, be taken away. And, to conclude all, let those who are now *living deliciously*, and *glorifying themselves* in the forgetfulness of God, abusing the various gifts of his bounty to his dishonour, and saying in their hearts, *that they shall see no sorrow*, remember how suddenly their state may be changed; how quickly they may sink into the depths of misery, proportionable to the height of their abused prosperity; and experience a *torment and sorrow*, which will be doubly bitter in the remembrance of their former condition. Let such, therefore, in whatever rank of life they are, according to the words of Daniel to the most illustrious king of Babylon, (Dan. iv. 27.) *Break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthning out of their tranquillity; and give glory to God,* before all their cheerful light be exchanged for darkness, and all the harmony of their *music* for *weping and wailing*, groaning and lamentation *for ever*.

## S E C T. XXII

*The triumphs of the heavenly host in the fall of Babylon are described, and further illustrated, by the view of an attack made by Christ and his army, on the beast, which ended in an entire victory over him. Rev. XIX. throughout.*

## REVELATION XIX. 1.

REV. XIX. 1.  
AND after these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, *Hallelujah*, salvation, and glory, and all honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

AND after these things, this affecting representation of the certain destruction of Babylon, as the seat of the antichristian kingdom, I heard the voice as of a great multitude in heaven, who seemed to be triumphing on this occasion, saying, *Hallelujah*; let the name of Jehovah, the most high God, be ever praised and exalted. Let this great *salvation*, and all the *glory and honour*, which can arise from this, and all his other wonderful works and the power so amazingly displayed in them, be ascribed to

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XIX. 1

our God. For his judgments [are] true and righteous, and we have lately seen a most glorious illustration of them; for he hath judged the great harlot, who corrupted the whole earth with the contagion of her fornication; and he has awfully avenged the blood of his faithful servants and martyrs, which hath been [shed] so profusely by her cruel hand. And a second time, at the conclusion of the hymn, they said *Hallelujah*: and looking down upon her ruins, they added, *The smoke of her [torment] ascends for ever and ever*; and God is pursuing the impenitent sinners he has destroyed in her, with far more terrible vengeance in a future state, than any they could endure while they continued in the body. (Isa. xxxiv. 10.) And the twenty-four elders, and the four animals, so often mentioned before, who still appeared present, fell down and worshipped God, who was represented sitting upon the throne, saying, *Amen; Hallelujah*, so let it be; let universal Hallelujahs, and everlasting praises, rise to thee, O thou ever-adorable Jehovah, who art most worthy to receive them. And a voice came out from the throne which said, in my hearing, *Now praise our God*, in the most exalted strains of rapturous devotion, *all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great*, in your various ranks and circumstances of life. Adore his great and magnificent name, so highly exalted, and, in these scenes of wonder so gloriously displayed. And I heard [a sound] which was as the voice of a great multitude, and loud as the voice of many waters, when the waves of the sea are in a violent agitation, and like the voice of mighty thunders, saying, *Hallelujah, for the Lord God Almighty, the omnipotent Jehovah, who is the Author and Support of universal nature, reigneth*, and is about to exalt his kingdom among men to more visible splendour than it has ever yet worn. And we will now, in an especial manner, rejoice and exult in the greatest transport of holy joy, and we will give glory to him, because the marriage of the Lamb is come; and his wife has prepared herself to meet him, being adorned with all those ornaments, which are meet and graceful in themselves, and most agreeable

2 For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, *Alleluia*. And her smoke rise up for ever and ever

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, *Amen: Alleluia*.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, *Praise our God*, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him both small and great

6 And I heard, as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*

7 Let us be glorified and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship

to him. And he is going to espouse his church with circumstances of the highest festivity and solemnity. *And it was given to her, that, in token of her virgin-innocence and sanctity, she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and resplendent; and the fine linen, that I speak of, is intended to signify the righteous acts of the saints,*<sup>a</sup> whereby they are adorned in the sight of God, and an evidence given of the sincerity of that faith, which interests them in the merit of what their Lord has performed, to which they ultimately owe their acceptance before him.

secr. xxii.

Rev. xix. 8

And he said unto me, Write this down, as an important truth, in which all that read this book in future ages will be greatly concerned, *Happy, [are] they who are invited to be guests at the splendid marriage-supper of the Lamb, which is now prepared, and shall accept the invitation, so as to partake of its blessings. And he said unto me, These are the true words of God, and are to be regarded by thee and all that read them, as an oracle which he hath inspired. (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2.)*

And while he was speaking to me in this manner, over-awed by his majestic appearance, *I fell before his feet to pay homage to him. And he immediately interposed to prevent it, and said unto me, See [thou do it] not; for I am not worthy of such regard from thee, being a fellow-servant with thee, and with the rest of thy brethren,<sup>b</sup> who resolutely and faithfully keep the testimony of Jesus. Pay thine homage, in such expressions of it, to God alone. I am now sent for the service of that religion to which you*

<sup>a</sup> The *righteous acts of the saints* ] So δικαιώματα evidently signifies; and, therefore, though I cannot do doubt but it is with regard to the obedience and righteousness of it: Son of God, that all our righteous acts are accepted before God, and I've accordingly referred to this doctrine in the paraphrase: yet I cannot suppose that these words have that reference which some have imagined, to the imputation of his righteousness to us. And I hope Christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture, even though it should be at the expense of their reputation for orthodoxy with some who profess, not care-

theless, to make scripture their standard.

<sup>b</sup> With thy brethren.] The expression in the Greek obliges me to give the word this turn: ἐν τῷ σου καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου. But Mr. Fleming understands it, *I am one of thy brethren*, which he thinks intimates, that this was the departed spirit of an apostle; perhaps of St. Peter or St. Paul, or his own brother James, though not in a form to be known. And, on the same mistaken principle, he thinks the person speaking, chap. xxi. 9, might be the spirit of one of the prophets, perhaps Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel. Fleming's Christol. Vol. I. p. 81

SECT. and your brethren are making such considerable  
XXII. sacrifices; *for the spirit of prophecy is the testi-*  
*mony of Jesus, and serves in a glorious manner,*  
Rev. to confirm his Divine mission to all that know  
XIX. 10. and duly observe the circumstances of it; and  
that which I now reveal to thee, makes a con-  
siderable article of the proof.

11 And a glorious vision immediately followed  
this; *for I saw heaven opened, and behold, and*  
*observe it with due attention, a white horse ap-*  
*peared, and he that sat upon it [was] called*  
*Faithful and True,* being indeed no other than  
the person speaking of him elsewhere, as the  
Amen, the faithful and true Witness; *and he*  
*judges and makes war in righteousness,* and not  
like the unjust conquerors of the earth, who are  
so ready to use their superior power to oppress

12 all that fall under it. This was the glorious  
Prince, *whose eyes [are] piercing as a flame of*  
*fire; and many diadems were upon his head, hav-*  
*ing also a mysterious name written upon them,*  
*which no man knows but himself,* to signify, that  
there are mysteries in his nature, and in the ad-  
ministration of his kingdom, which it is impos-  
13 sible for men to find out. And, to express  
the irresistible power with which he triumphs  
over his enemies, and brings destruction upon  
them according to his pleasure, *he [was] clothed*  
*in a garment dipt in blood; and his name is cal-*  
*led, The word of God,* the glorious and Divine  
Person, whom I have elsewhere spoken of, as in  
the beginning with God, and himself God, and  
the great Medium of Divine revelation in all

14 ages. And the armies which are in heaven fol-  
lowed him, in token of being most willingly and  
entirely under his command, and they appeared  
*[riding] on white horses, and themselves clothed*  
*in fine linen, white and perfectly clean and pure,*  
to denote their perfect innocence and righteous-

15 ness. And he still retains this circumstance  
in the vision I at first saw of him, that *there*  
*went out of his mouth a sharp sword, that with*  
*it he might smite the heathen;* to signify the  
power of his word; *and he shall govern them*  
*with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-*  
*press of the indignation and wrath of Almighty*  
*God,* which was signified by the blood staining

God. for the testi-  
mony of Jesus is the  
spirit of prophecy.

11 And I saw hea-  
ven opened, and be-  
hold, a white horse;  
and he that sat upon  
him was called Faith-  
ful and True, and in  
righteousness he  
doth judge and make  
war.

12 His eyes were  
a flame of fire, and  
on his head were  
many crowns; and  
he had a name writ-  
ten that no man  
knew but he himself.

13 And he was  
clothed with a ves-  
ture dipt in blood,  
and his name is cal-  
led, The word of  
God.

14 And the armies,  
which were in heaven  
followed him upon  
white horses, clothed  
in fine linen, white  
and clean.

15 And out of his  
mouth goeth a sharp  
sword, that with it he  
should smite the na-  
tions; and he shall  
rule them with a rod  
of iron; and he  
treadeth the wine-  
press of the fierceness  
and wrath of Al-  
mighty God.

his garments, to intimate, that he shall subdue the proudest enemies with as much ease as men burst grapes by treading them under their feet. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 2, 3.) *And he hath upon*

SECT. XXII. Rev. XIX. 16

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

*his garment and his thigh*, that is, upon the sword which hangs upon his thigh, a magnificent and exalted name written, even **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**; to signify his universal empire over all the princes and potentates on earth, and in heaven.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ;

*And I saw a single angel*, but one of great majesty and strength, detaching himself, as it were from the army in heaven, who followed the great leader of the Lord's host on their white horses; and he was seen by me *standing in the sun*; and, to intimate the approaching slaughter and desolation which was so soon to come upon the enemies of the church, *he cried with a loud voice, saying to the eagles, and vultures, and all the other birds of prey, which were flying in the midst of heaven, Come and assemble yourselves to the supper of the great God*, for he is about to make a splendid entertainment for you; *That ye may eat the flesh of mighty kings, and the flesh of famous commanders, who have led on their thousands to battle; and the flesh of the mighty soldiers, who have fought so courageously under their banners; and the flesh of warlike horses, that were advancing with so much intrepidity and rage to the battle; and the flesh of those who sat thereon, and were so ready to trust to their strength or their speed; and the flesh of all the promiscuous multitude, freemen and slaves, both small and great, who shall fall down together in the dust, and pour out their souls in blood, leaving their mingled carcasses for your prey.* (Compare Ezek.

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw one beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the beast, and

xxxix. 17, 18.) *And, to fulfil this awful decree of the great God, whose influence over all human affairs is supreme, and who knows how to work his own purposes, even by the greatest malice and rage of his enemies, I saw the beast appearing again, as at the head of the antichristian interest; and the kings of the earth, who supported him, and gave their power unto him; and I saw all their armies gathered together to make war with him who sitteth upon the white*



horse, and with all his army, even the host of against his army.

XXII. heaven, which I mentioned as with him: insensi-

ble of his superior power, and madly borne on

to their own destruction, they marched their

feeble forces against him, and all his celestial

legions. And the issue was such as might be

expected; for *the beast was taken captive,*<sup>c</sup> and

with him also the false prophet, who had wrought

so many fallacious signs before him, by which he

had deceived those who received the mark of the

beast; and those who worshipped his image;

and they were bound fast in chains of Divine

vengeance and both of them were cast alive<sup>d</sup> into

the lake of fire which burnt so fiercely, enraged

with stores of brimstone, to make the flames

more durable, and more tormenting. And the

rest, who had so insolently and foolishly fol-

lowed the banners of these accursed leaders,

were slain with the sword that came out of the

mouth of the great leader of the heavenly army,

even him who sat on the white horse, described

before, robed with light, and crowned with

glory. And their carcasses were left unburied

on the field of battle; and all the birds of the

air, according to the invitation which the angel

had given them, were satiated with their flesh.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn by what we have here been reading, to adore the Lord God Omnipotent, who reigneth over all, and who displays the truth and righteousness of his judgments; in his vengeance on the enemies of his church, even when he inflicts on them a tor-

[<sup>c</sup> *Beast was taken.*] What Brandt tells us, of the interpretation given by a divine at Heidelberg to this text, as promising Frederick, king of Bohemia, that he should take the emperor prisoner, and that all the other potentates of Europe should be subjected to his sovereign will, appears too ridiculous to be canvassed; but I mention it to engage men to be cautious how they apply any of these prophecies to events which may happen to themselves, or those for whom they are immediately concerned. Brandt's Hist. of the Reform. Vol. IV. p. 202.—Compare chap. xvi. 10; and *Gen.* xvi. note<sup>b</sup> and<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> *Cast alive.* See the note on chap.

xx. 14. Doctor Clarke observes, it is only said of other sinners, *they were cast into the lake*; and this he supposes intimates a distinction of punishment, severe in proportion to the heinousness of the punished; and he thinks it illustrated by the words of Moses, concerning Korah and his company, Numb. xvi. 33. *If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me*: intimating, that there would be as much difference in their punishment, as between being executed in the common way, and swallowed up with an earthquake. Clarke's Post. Sermon Vol. I. p. 400, 401.

ment, the smoke of which rises up for ever and ever. In the certain assurance, that in due time he will plead his own cause, and rescue and exalt his people, let all his servants and people praise him, even all that fear him, both small and great, and labour to live that Divine life of gratitude, and joyful thanksgiving on earth, which may anticipate the pleasures and employments of the heavenly world. The time will at length come, when all of such a character shall celebrate the marriage-supper of the Lamb; yea, when the whole society shall appear in his presence as one chaste virgin, whom he has espoused to himself; and whom, with unutterable delight, he places in his more immediate view, not only as arrayed in robes of pure and shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, but as perfectly free from spot, or blemish, or any such thing. He will admit them all to feast in his own presence; yea, to dwell for ever with him; so shall we ever be with the Lord. These are the true sayings of God. And though a consciousness of our own utter unworthiness of such honours, might be ready to detract from the credibility of these divine assurances, or at least prevent us from giving so clear an assent to them, as we might otherwise do, yet let God be true, and every man a liar.

And in the mean time, in the mingled scenes of adversity and prosperity, which attend the Israel of God, let us direct our believing eyes to him, who is faithful and true; to him, who both administers justice, and wages war in righteousness. Let us reverence his penetrating eyes, which are like a flame of fire. Let us rejoice in the diadems placed upon his head, to signify the extent of his dominion; and read with awe the inscription upon his vesture, and his thigh, The word of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. As such let us pay our homage to him; and let the favour of lords, and kings, be as nothing to us, where his favour or his honour is concerned. The proudest of earthly potentates oppose his dominion in vain; in vain do they marshal their captains, and their mighty men; vain is the strength of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the combinations of bond and free, though Satan himself abet their rebellion, and inspire them with subtlety, and arm them with rage: their subtlety shall be defeated, their rage shall be repelled. The sword of the Lord shall devour them. The birds of prey shall at his pleasure be feasted with their carcases; and the sad catastrophe of their bodies shall be only an imperfect emblem of the anguish and misery of their spirits, when plunged with the evil spirit that deceived them, they sink deep into the lake that burns for ever, and feel the terrors of the second death. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear; and, sensible of his uncontrollable dominion, and your own weakness and imperfection, even while ye rejoice before him, rejoice with trembling. (Psal. ii. 10, 11.)

SECT.

XXII.

Verse.

5, 6

7, 8

11

12

13, 16

17, 21

## SECT. XXIII.

*The binding of Satan for a thousand years, during which the gospel is greatly to prevail; with a view of the destruction of the enemies of Christ, upon their making their last attempt against his church; and of the universal judgment. Rev. XX. throughout.*

## REVELATION XX. 1.

SECT. XXIII. **THUS** the beast was conquered and taken; but the dragon yet remained at liberty. *And that I might also be informed as to his doom, I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and he had also a great chain in his hand: And he advanced with the intrepidity of one who feared no resistance; and laid hold on the dragon dreadful as he was; even that old serpent who is called the devil, from being the great false accuser; and Satan, as being the great adversary both of God and man; and he bound him for the space of 3 a thousand years\*. And, having opened the door with the key that he bore, he cast him into the abyss, and shut him down, and set a seal upon him, to signify that none should break open the door; that he might not deceive the nations any more, for the time above-mentioned, that is, till a thousand years were accomplished, and then he must be loosed again for a little time, and make his last effort against the cause of God, and the*

REV. XX. 1.

**AND** I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season.

\* *I thousand years.* I think we must despair of being able to interpret any passage of scripture upon the plainest principle of reason, if this does not signify, that there shall be such a period as this, in which Satan shall be remarkably restrained and the Christian interest shall prevail. But whether the *thousand years* are here to be taken literally, as is most probable, or whether here, or elsewhere, each day is put for a year, and consequently, the whole period be 360,000 years, I will not pretend to determine. This thought has been very lately started by an ingenious and worthy person, who hath, I doubt not, intended the service of Christianity, though I am very apprehensive, he has failed in some of the

mediums by which he has endeavoured to prove this point. See Dr. Whitby's Treatise on the Millennium, where he shews at large, that this whole passage is figurative, agreeable to the prophetic style, especially in this book. And verse 4th may only intimate, that the *spoils* of the martyrs seemed to live again in those whom God should then raise up. Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 14; Rev. xi. 11, 12; Rom. xi. 15. This interpretation is illustrated and confirmed also by Mr. Lowman. So that the seventh *chiliad*; or 1000 years, from the creation of the world, is to be a kind of Sabbath. Compare Ainsworth on Gen. i. 31. and Worthington on the Redemption, p. 211, 213.

SECT.  
XXIII.  
Rev.  
XX. 4

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead live not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power.

kingdom of his son Jesus Christ. And after this, *I saw thrones placed, and they sat upon them; and a power of judgment was given to them; and the souls of them who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, when his cause was so triumphant, and who bravely opposed the torrent of prevailing degeneracy, so that they had not received his mark in their foreheads, and upon their hands, when it was so furiously urged upon all; these appeared to rise in triumph, and they lived and reigned with Christ,* whose cause, during this time, was prosperous and flourishing, even for a whole thousand years: *But this was peculiar to this holy remnant: for as to the rest of the dead, they received not till the thousand years were accomplished;*<sup>d</sup> so that *this [was] the first resurrection.* Eminently happy and holy [is] he, who has a part in the first resurrection I have been describing; it is a singular felicity and high token of the degree, in which God, the supreme Standard and Judge of moral rectitude and holiness, approves his character: *on such the second death, we before described with so many dreadful circumstances, as the portion of the wicked, shall have no degree of power,\* nor shall any of its terrible forerun-*

<sup>b</sup> *The souls of them who had been beheaded.* [Dr. Whitby, not unjustly, thinks this a more expressive, to signify the resurrection of their bodies. (See his Treatise of the Millennium, chap. in.) Mr. Fleming observes, it is said elsewhere, that their souls were actually living before, and *these* he thinks, must be put for *those* of the dead, because it is said, the rest of the dead lived not till a thousand years. Flem. Christol. Vol. II. p. 57.

<sup>c</sup> *They lived and reigned with Christ.*] This is the chief text on which Mr. Fleming builds his doctrine of the first resurrection; when, he supposes those who have died for the testimony of Jesus, and other most excellent saints, shall be raised from the dead; not, (he imagines,) to live upon earth, but to live a thousand years with Christ in heaven; enjoying a blessedness nearly approaching, if not altogether equal, to that which good men are to enjoy after the general resurrection;

while the rest have only the common blessing of the separate state, during this period; and, even after the resurrection, shall have only inferior degrees of glory, to what these first fruits of the resurrection shall for ever possess. Flem. Christol. Vol. II. p. 42.

<sup>d</sup> *The rest of the dead, &c.*] This has been urged to prove, that a proper resurrection is here spoken of; but I much doubt the justness of the conclusion.—Such expressions may, sometimes, be thrown in to provoke that *obedience*, which seemed, upon the whole, convenient in such a series of prophecy. Compare chap. xvi. 17.

<sup>e</sup> *On such the second death shall have no power.*] Mr. Fleming considers this as an intimation, that the second death will have some power to terrify, though only for a little while, those good men, who shall not have their share in the first resurrection. See his Christol. Vol. II. p. 43. But the

SECT. XXXIII.  
 Rev. AX. 6

ners, in the execution of Divine wrath upon his enemies; *but they shall be the priests of God and of Christ; and they shall not only be afterwards admitted to a kingdom of eternal glory, but shall reign with him a thousand years partaking in the triumph of his kingdom upon*

7 *earth. And when the thousand years before described, shall be accomplished, then Satan shall, for a certain time, be loosed from his confinement, to give the last proof of his malice against Christ and his saints. And he shall go forth to deceive the nations, who are in the four distant corners of the earth,† and shall prevail against them, so that they shall engage in a vain and fatal enterprise, for the overthrow of what God has determined for ever to establish: even Gog and Magog, as the prophecy of Ezekiel, (chapters xxxviii, xxxix.) stiles the enemies of God's people: and Satan shall succeed in his attempts to gather them together in war; even an army, whose number [is] like the sand of the sea.*

9 Accordingly I beheld them in vision, as drawn forth in order of battle, and saw, that they went up over the breadth of the earth; so that they seemed to cover the face of it from north to south, and then surrounded the camp of the saints, and Jerusalem, the beloved city, in which they dwelt; and it seemed at first in imminent danger, but it was not long before it was remarkably delivered; for fire came down from God out of heaven, at once, and devoured them; so that there were no more remainders of them to be seen; but they, and all their dreadful artillery, perished and disappeared, as if they had never existed. (Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 22.) And then the devil, who had deceived them, came in

power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them,

notion appears to me very absurd, and ill to agree with the representation which scripture gives of the universal judgment, as a day of unmingled joy and triumph to all the righteous.

† *The four corners of the earth*] As it is most certainly known, from the most convincing arguments, and from repeated experience, that the earth is of a spherical form, it is certain, that by the four corners of the earth, we are to understand the nations which lay at the greatest distance from

the city of the saints; which, I suppose, does here especially signify Jerusalem. And we may suppose, that those who live in that situation shall be last instructed in the gospel, and so capable of being most easily engaged to rise up against it. Compare chap. vii. 1. and paraphrase.—By Gog and Magog, many understand the Scythians, and other northern nations, whom the devil will stir up to assault the people of God



106 *All mankind shall be judged according to their works.*

secr. in which were registered the names of all those  
 1311. happy persons, who, according to the tenor of  
 the Divine declarations to men, should be the  
 Rev. inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and live  
 1312. with God for ever in the enjoyment of felicity  
 and glory. *And the dead were all* partially  
*judged out of the things written in the books,*  
 and in a manner agreeable to the tenor of them,  
*according to their works,* as they had been agree-  
 able or disagreeable to the discoveries which  
 God had made to them of his will for the rule

13 of their actions. *And, that none might be*  
*exempt from coming into judgment, I per-*  
*ceived that the resurrection extended also to the*  
*sea, which gave up the dead that were in it ;*  
*and death, and the unseen world, and separate*  
*state, in all their extensive domains, gave up*  
*the dead that were in them, all that death had*  
*swallowed up, and Hades received ; and they*  
*were judged, as I said before, every one accord-*  
 14 *ing to their works.* *And I saw, in the vision,*  
 emblematical persons, who seemed to preside  
 over the regions of *death and Hades*, or the sepa-  
 rate state; and, to signify that human souls  
 should be no more separated from the bodies,  
 to which they were now united, these persons, as  
 it appeared *were cast into the lake of fire, which*  
 I have before described, and of which I said,

15 *that this is the second death.*<sup>1</sup> *And as the regis-*  
 ter, which God, in pursuance of his counsels of  
 everlasting love, had kept of those, whom it  
 was his gracious purpose, agreeably to the tenor  
 of his gospel, to save, was complete, I saw,  
 that if *any one were not found written in the*  
*book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire* so  
 that this was the awful end of the whole human  
 race, to be plunged into that flaming and eternal

life; and the dead  
 were judged out of  
 those things which  
 were written in the  
 books, according to  
 their works.

15 And the sea  
 gave up the dead  
 which were in it;  
 and death and hell  
 delivered up the dead  
 which were in them;  
 and they were judged  
 every man accord-  
 ing to their works.

14 And death and  
 hell were cast into the  
 lake of fire: This is  
 the second death.

15 And whosoever  
 was not found written  
 in the book of life,  
 was cast into the lake  
 of fire.

<sup>1</sup> *Death and hades were cast into the lake of fire.*] It is no wonder a man of Mr. Hobbes's disposition and principles should be ready to catch at any argument, to prove the annihilation of the wicked. But, that which he insinuates from this passage, (see his Leviathan, p. 335.) seems to be very precarious. For, as Archbishop Dawes observes, (see his Sermon No. 7, p. 100.) to talk of hell being cast into a part of itself, is downright non-

sense. The plain meaning is, there shall be no more separate state. And this I think, clearly overthrows that hypothesis, which supposes this last fire will kill those that are thrown into it, and that their separate spirits will for ever remain in that misery, which must be the consequence of having lost happiness and hope, while they retain their thinking powers; a doctrine which Dr. Whitby has strangely taught in his Append. to 2 Thess. chap. i.

## *Reflections on the future judgment.*

ruin, or to be received into those abodes of glory, which I am next to describe, under the figure of a new heaven, and a new earth. (Compare Rev. xxi. 1. note \*.)

### IMPROVEMENT.

WE have here a most affecting view before us, of that important event, in which we are all intimately concerned. Whatever the first resurrection may import, or that glorious reign of a thousand years, (which probably intimates a signal revival of the Christian cause in the world, and a display of its influence beyond what hath yet been known,) I say, whatever these events may particularly intend, the illustrious day, in which heaven and earth are to pass away, demands the attention of all mankind. For the dead, both small and great, whether buried in the earth or the sea, must then stand before God: Therefore let all the living, both small and great, seriously weigh the solemnity and the importance of that appearance. Let them often look forward to the awful period, when the glorious throne shall be set, the important volumes opened, which contain the records of our lives and actions, and of God's gracious and merciful transactions with us. We must be judged according to our works; that God before whom all our ways are, and who searches all our hearts, will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Let us judge ourselves impartially, that we be not condemned of the Lord; and conscious how unable we should be to stand in that judgment, if God were rigorous to lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, let us humbly apply to the throne of mercy, to the blood of his Son, to the grace of his gospel-covenant. So shall we find mercy of the Lord in that day, and be the priests of God, and of Christ, and reign with him, not a thousand years alone, but for everlasting ages.

In the mean time, let those who have no reverence for his majesty, who have no esteem for his gospel, who have never taken this awful alarm, who have never fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, tremble at these awakening views. Let them all, of every condition, both small and great, say in their hearts, *Who shall dwell with devouring flames, and lie down in everlasting burnings, even in this lake of fire, into which every one who is not found written in the book of life, shall be cast, and where the wretched victims of Divine justice, shall be tormented for ever and ever?*

How melancholy does the face of our earth appear, when we reflect on the reign of Satan on it, on the influence of the dragon, and the beast, and the false prophet! O Lord, cut short their



sect. power; send down the angel that has the key of the bottomless  
 xxiii. pit, to bind this destroyer; yea, when he shall be loosed for a sea-  
 son, moderate his rage; support thy saints under the terror of  
 every assault, till thou appear to the last confusion of their ene-  
 mies, till thou appear to close this perplexing scene, by the wise-  
 7, 8 and glorious catastrophe of all things; when it shall be seen,  
 4, 5 that the souls of them who were beheaded for the testimony of  
 Jesus, were not lost, and that it was wisdom strenuously to re-  
 fuse the mark of the beast, and the homage so generally paid to  
 his image, though men might neither buy nor sell, nor enjoy  
 their liberty, nor their lives, without making an entire submis-  
 sion to it.

## SECT. XXIV.

*The solemn introduction to the glorious vision of the new heaven and the new earth: with a declaration of the blessing to attend the faithful and courageous conqueror, and the misery to be inflicted on the impious and wicked offenders.* Rev. XXI. 1—8.

### REVELATION XXI. 1.

sect. **AND** when this scene of things was passed  
 xxiv. away, another most glorious and delightful  
 one opened upon me; for I saw a new heaven,  
 Rev. and a new earth, wherein I knew righteousness  
 XXI. was ever to dwell, for the former heaven, and  
 the former earth was passed away, as I said be-  
 fore; and the sea was no more, the whole ter-

REV. XXI. 1

AND I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

\* The sea was no more ] The consequence which Dr. Thomas Burnet hath drawn from hence, in his theory, to prove there was no sea in the paradisaical state, is so manifestly absurd, that I need urge nothing against it. For it is certain, were God to cover the whole sea with dry land, the earth must quickly perish, as well as much of its commerce be destroyed. But a world more populous, than this can be, while the sea takes up so large a part of its surface, might well be expressed by such a figurative vision. As for this account of the new heaven and new earth in general, commentators have been divided. Some have thought it represents the happy state of the church upon earth, during the Millennium. A very ingenious writer, I mean Mr Worthington, in his Treatise of the Extent and Progress of Redemption, endeavours to prove that it is intended to represent a yet more per-

fect and durable period of prosperity, which shall be enjoyed upon this earth, after the Millennium, and when the paradisaical state shall be yet more fully restored, by the more abundant progressive influence of the gospel. But, on weighing the whole matter, I must declare myself of the opinion of those divines, who understand it as an emblematical description of the happiness which the saints are to enjoy in heaven after the resurrection, and to enjoy for ever, when, according to the preceding descriptions, the dead shall be judged according to their works, when this heaven and earth shall have passed away with a great noise, and the elements shall have melted with fervent heat, as St John and St Peter concur to describe it; and when death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, with all that are not written in the book of life. Phrases, which, I think, cannot be explained properly of

## and of the New Jerusalem, coming down from God.

2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne,

any event but those of the day of universal judgment. And it is certain, that if we do not go into this interpretation of them, there is no view given us of the final catastrophe of things on this earth of ours, in this comprehensive prophecy, though intended to represent the triumph of Christianity, which seems in theory a very improbable supposition.

[Descending from God out of heaven.] I apprehend he saw in the vision an appearance of a city, which seemed, like the sheet which Peter saw, to be let down from heaven, and appeared pendant as it were, in the air, in such a view, that the foundations were visibly distinguishable from the superstructure, and this he considered, not

raqueous globe was changed for another kind of world, wherein every thing was incomparably more beautiful and excellent than the face of nature had ever been, and room was made for a vastly greater number of inhabitants: And

as an emblem of the eminent holiness and felicity which should there reign, *And I saw the holy city, that is, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven*; and it was prepared with all imaginable ornaments and decorations, like a bride adorned for her husband, and preparing to meet him with all her charms set out to the greatest advantage. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying aloud, Behold the tabernacle of the living God [is] now with men: and he shall pitch his tent among them, in token of his favour and friendship, and they shall be owned by him as his people, and God himself shall be with and among them as their God, their Protector and Friend, their Guardian and Father, their supreme Good and final Portion. And

God shall, with parental tenderness, wipe away their tears from their eyes; though here their tears have plentifully flowed, not one shall now be left on any of their faces. And death shall be no more, he shall be for ever banished those blissful regions, and with him all his melancholy train, nor shall there be grief, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain, or labour, for all the former things are passed away, all the mournful scenes which were on earth so familiar to their eyes. And he that sat upon the throne

as actually the abode of the blessed, but as a figurative representation of the holiness and felicity in which they were to dwell, so that it was a type of what the church itself should be. To interpret it therefore, as if there were now such a city made in heaven, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, and settled upon some spot of it, is so wild, and romantic a thought, that one would wonder any one person of learning and understanding should ever have embraced it. Compare Hallott's Notes and Discourses, Vol I p. 200 See Isa. lii 1, 12 [He that sat upon the throne] As the Lamb, and He that sat upon the throne, have been mentioned, as distinct through

*He that overcomes, shall inherit all things.*

xxiv.

Rev.

xxiv.

Rev.

xxiv.

then spake himself, and said with his own av-  
ful and gracious voice, which through the whole  
vision I had not before heard, *Behold, I make all  
things new.* I exert my power in producing a  
new creation, whence every trace of seeming  
imperfection and irregularity shall be banished.  
And he then condescended to take notice of me;  
and singling me out by his eye, and directing  
his voice to me, he said unto me, while all my  
soul was awed into reverence and attention,  
*Write what thou hearest, for these are true and  
faithful words*; and as their contents are im-  
portant, so they are beyond all controversy cer-  
tain. And he said unto me, Wonderful as the  
prediction is, doubt not of its accomplishment;  
*It is done*, it is, as it were already present with  
me; *I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Begin-  
ning, and the End*; too great and excellent to  
need to use any artifice with my creatures; and  
far above the temptation of raising in them any  
false hopes and expectations, *I will give to him  
that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life  
freely*; I open the springs, and they shall flow  
in abundance; and let every humble soul that  
desires it, freely come and quench his thirst.

- 7 I have already made many gracious promises to  
him who overcometh; and I will now comprise  
them all in one; *the conqueror shall inherit all  
things*; the whole new creation shall be his, he  
shall possess its blessings to the utmost of his  
most enlarged desires. *And I will be to him a  
God, a source of complete and everlasting bles-  
sedness; and he shall be my son, and as my son,  
inherit my kingdom, and dwell with me in it  
through eternal ages.* But as for the fearful  
and unbelieving, who dare not face the difficul-  
ties which a courageous profession of my religion  
requires; *and the abominable, who have devoted  
themselves to sensual affections and pursuits;  
and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers,*

said, Behold, I make  
all things new. And  
he said unto me,  
Write: for these  
words are true and  
faithful.

6 And he said un-  
to me, It is done. I  
am Alpha and Ome-  
ga, the Beginning  
and the End: I will  
give unto him that is  
athirst, of the foun-  
tain of the water of  
life freely.

7 He that over-  
cometh shall inherit  
all things; and I will  
be his God, and he  
shall be my son.

8 But the fearful  
and unbelieving, and  
the abominable, and  
murderers, and  
whoremongers, and

the whole book, and as the Lamb is  
mentioned here as the *Spouse of the church*,  
I am ready to understand the *Father* as  
the Person here spoken of. But I will  
not absolutely insist upon this, because  
in chap. xx. 11, 12, it seems to be Christ

who is represented as sitting upon the  
throne; since we know it is he who is to  
appear as *universal Judge*, under which  
character the Person who sat upon the  
throne is there spoken of.

## Reflections on the new heaven and the new earth.

sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

and idolaters, and all liars<sup>d</sup>, all who allow themselves in their words, or in their actions, to violate the eternal and invariable law of truth by which I have governed myself, and by which I have required all my rational creatures to be governed; *their part [shall be] in the lake which burns for ever with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Let this therefore be recorded by thy pen, that every future generation of men may carefully peruse, and seriously consider it; that every sincere believer, however weak, may be encouraged, and that every obstinate sinner may be terrified, and, if possible, awakened; and that none, in the day of my final judgment, may complain, that they have not been warned and cautioned with the greatest plainness, and with the greatest solemnity.

### IMPROVEMENT.

LET us pause a little, before we proceed to the more particular description of this glorious scene; and let our hearts rejoice in this general view of the *new heaven, and the new earth*, and of the *holy city descending out of heaven from God*. Will God in very deed dwell with men? Will he dwell with them for ever? Will he fix his tabernacle with them, and condescend to avow them for his people, and to make himself known unto them as their God? Verse 1, 2

Let our souls then be awakened, to pay a due attention to such glorious and important promises. Let us hearken to the voice of him who sitteth upon the throne, whose words are undoubtedly true and faithful. Lord, dost thou make all things new? Verify the word first, we implore thee, in our hearts that it may be verified at length in our state and condition. O thou Alpha and Omega, who art the Beginning and the End, thou who hast done so much to introduce this Divine scheme of salvation, perfect it, we intreat thee, with respect to us; exciting our thirst after the water of life, and may we come and take it as freely as it is offered in the gospel!

In what part of the holy scripture is *life and death, the blessing and the curse*, set before us, if not in these awful passages? Let

<sup>d</sup> *All liars.*] Some think this refers to the general notion, which is so largely inculcated by the well-known author of the Religion of Nature delineated, that there is a language in actions, as well as words; and that the malignity of every

vicious and immoral action, consists in its contradiction to the great rule of truth. But in this view it must comprehend the case of express lying; against which, in the most obvious sense, the terrors of this clause are most directly levelled.

SECT. those who are too timorous resolutely to adhere to their duty, be  
 XXIV. recovered, and as it were, driven back to it, by the fear of Divine  
 vengeance. And let all habitual and obstinate sinners, and espe-  
 cially *all liars*, who bring up the rear of a catalogue, in which  
*murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters*, make  
 a part, be awakened by this awful threatening. O, desperate and  
 inexcusable folly, to be afraid of the *displeasure of men*, and the  
 inconveniencies which may possibly attend an adherence to the  
 truth, and not to fear *the lake which burns for ever with fire and  
 brimstone !*

But let us courageously encounter, and then we shall conquer  
 all our enemies, animated by these glorious promises, in which  
 all the encouragements contained in the sacred volume, are com-  
 7 prised, that *he, who overcomes, shall inherit all things*, while God  
 owns himself *his God*, and acknowledges him as *his son*; and if  
*a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ*;  
 and if so, *all things are indeed ours*. Let those tears, that will  
 now sometimes silently steal down our cheeks, be shed as tears,  
 which we expect quickly to have *wiped away*, even by the soft  
 4 and compassionate *hand of our heavenly Father*. Let us bear our  
 sorrows, and our pains, as those that know we shall, through Di-  
 vine grace, soon be out of the reach of them; and let us meet  
 death itself, if we are sincere believers in Christ, as those that  
 know its reign will soon come to a period; and that when once  
 we are recovered from it, by the almighty power of our great  
 General, we shall never more be subject to its invasion, or any  
 of its terrors; even then, *when all former things shall have passed  
 away*.

## SECT. XXV.

*A sublime and particular description of the splendour, glory, pu-  
 rity, and happiness, of the heavenly Jerusalem.* Rev. XXI. 9,  
 to the end.

## REVELATION XXI. 9.

SECT.  
 XXV.

Rev.  
 XXI. 9.

AND after he, who sat on the throne, had  
 condescended to speak to me, in the words  
 I have just now mentioned, *there came to me one*  
 of the seven angels, who had the seven vials full  
 of the seven last plagues which had lately been  
 poured out; and he spake with me, saying, *Come,*  
 10 *and I will shew thee the bride, the wife of the*  
*Lamb*, and thou shalt observe how beautiful and  
 glorious she is. *And he brought me, in a vi-*  
*sion of the spirit, to a great and high mountain,*  
*and he shewed me that great city, the holy Jeru-*

REV. XXI. 9.

AND there came  
 unto me one of  
 the seven angels,  
 which had the seven  
 vials full of the seven  
 last plagues, and  
 talked with me, say-  
 ing, *Come hither, I*  
*will shew thee the*  
*bride, the Lamb's*  
*wife.*

10 And he carried  
 me away in the spirit  
 to a great and high

which was enlightened by the glory of God, &c.

mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *saalem, coming down out of heaven from God; which I understood to be an emblem of the church of Christ, in its most happy and glorious state.* And it was indeed a most delightful

11 Having the glory of God: and her light as, like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; *object to behold, having the glory of God shining round about it: and its lustre [was] like to that of a most precious gem, bright as a jasper stone, and clear as crystal; for the whole city, as it was represented to me pendent in the air, shone with an elegant and amazing lustre.*

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. *And it appeared having a great and high wall, for ever to secure it from all the attacks of its enemies; having also twelve gates, and over the gates there appeared twelve angels, as a celestial guard posted there; and there were names written upon them, which were [the names] of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel; to signify that it was the dwelling of the Israel of God.*

13 On the east, three gates, on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates, and on the west, three gates. *And the city made a complete square, having on the east side, which I first viewed, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.*

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were engraven; to signify, how great a dependence the church had on their testimony, and what an influence the gospel, which they preached, had upon raising this noble and Divine structure. *And as I saw the city suspended, as it were, in the air, I had an opportunity of observing, that the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were engraven; to signify, how great a dependence the church had on their testimony, and what an influence the gospel, which they preached, had upon raising this noble and Divine structure.*

15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. *And he that spake with me had, as the angel who appeared in vision to Ezekiel (chap. xl. 3.) a measuring rod, but with this circumstance of illustrious distinction, that it was a golden reed; and it was given him, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall.*

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. *And the city was a complete square; and its length was exactly equal to its breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, and each side was twelve thousand stadia, or furlongs. And,*

<sup>a</sup> The twelve tribes of the sons of Israel ] Such a regard continually maintained to the Jews, and their manners, and their temple-worship, might have a great tendency to conciliate their regards; and

may also afford some hints for the interpretation of many passages of the Old Testament, in which expressions, taken from the Jewish church, are used in describing that of the Messiah.

fact. which was most extraordinary of all, it appeared to me, in this vision, as a perfect cube, so that its length, and its breadth, and its height, were equal; which was an intimation how impossible it was for any of its enemies to scale the

bulwarks that defended it. And he measured the thickness of its wall, and found it one hundred forty-four cubits, the square of twelve; and this was according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel who had the measuring rod in his hand, and accurately took the dimensions

of it. And the building of its wall was like a complete rock of jasper, and the city [was] pure gold, and it was bright and clear, like refined glass. And to signify how firm the foundations of the walls of the city, which were the emblem of the apostles and their doctrine, [were] they appeared, adorned with every precious stone, like so many vast and solid rocks of gems, lying under the gates, and appearing radiant and glorious, while the city hung, as I said before, suspended in my sight. The first foundation [was] jasper; the second sapphire; the third chalcedony; these were on the east

side; the fourth emerald; The fifth sardonyx; the sixth sardius; these were on the north; the seventh chrysolite, or a stone of the colour of pure gold; the eighth beryl; the ninth, topaz; these were on the south; and, to complete the square, the tenth was chrysoprusus, or a beautiful mixture of gold and green; the eleventh, hyacinth; and the twelfth, amethyst; which appeared on the west side; thus they were agreeably variegated and decorated, with all the elegance and magnificence that can be imagined.

And the twelve gates [were] twelve pearls; each of the gates was of one entire undivided pearl, with all the beautiful pillars and arches, mould-

ed like the length, its breadth, and its height were equal.] As this is quite inconceivable, with regard to any cubical structure, which can be supposed of this magnitude, I look upon it as a wise and well-judged intimation, that all these descriptions are figurative. The like intimation is given in the vision of Ezekiel; according to which, if it were able to be taken literally, the building described must be a mile high.

[On the east side.] As the temple of Jerusalem was beheld in its greatest glory, when viewed from the east, towards which the beautiful gate looked, I think it is probable, that the like was observable in this visionary city, which was all as one temple in which God dwells.

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

The fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, a sardius; the seventh, a chrysolite; the eighth, a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprusus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl;

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl;

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl;

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl;

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl;

*all the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.*

and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall

[*a* *Glory of the Lord, &c.*] Some have thought, this was an extraordinary lustre, which seemed always to hover over it, like a sun never going down. I rather think, that the whole city appeared to him like a luminous object, sending out rays on every side, which he apprehended to be in consequence of God's dwelling there; and that these rays might have much of the lustre of the Shekinah. Mr. Fleming argues from this text, that the Lamb is the Shekinah in the heavenly world.

[*c* *The kings of the earth.*] This is the clause upon which Mr. Worthington insists very much, to prove, that we are to understand this description, not of the heavenly world, but of some glorious state of the Christian church, which is to pass

upon earth; and it must be acknowledged a plausible argument. The reader must consider, whether it is sufficient to outweigh those on the other side; and if it be not, I suppose he will find no solution preferable to that which I have here given; for I cannot suppose, that the kings of the earth are those who are to reign in this new earth, whose glory shall be reflected from; and so adorn the blissful city which they shall then inhabit. (Compare Isa. lx. 11. 20; lxv. 10.)

[*There shall be no night there.*] Mr. Worthington supposes, that a comet, meeting the earth at the conflagration, (for to such a confluence he ascribes that awful phenomenon,) shall give it such a blow, as to destroy its diurnal motion, leaving only



## Reflections on the heavenly Jerusalem.

the glory and honour of the nations into it; what ever is most desirable among all nations, seemed to meet together, to adorn that place, where good men of all nations shall dwell and reign with God for ever. And nothing unclean shall enter into it, nor [any thing which] practises abomination and falsehood of any kind, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life, in which none of such a detestable character can possibly have any place.

being the glory, and honour of the nations  
180 it.  
27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

### IMPROVEMENT. \*

**GLORIOUS** things are indeed spoken of thee, *O thou city of God.* (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) Thus does the Divine Being condescend to aid our feeble faith, by such sensible representations. But none of these things which are spoken, can give us an idea grand and magnificent enough. The pearls and the gems, the gold and the crystal, the honours of kings, and all the nations they govern, all fall inconceivably short of that glory; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor, active and boundless as the human imagination may seem, has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God has prepared for them that love him, in these regions of perpetual day, of everlasting security, in this grand temple, the whole of which shall be replenished with the most sensible tokens of his presence. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

27 And who shall abide in this thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in this thy holy hill? They who are written in the Lamb's book of life, they whom God has, from the beginning, chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, being predestinated to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ unto himself. And who are these? None that are unclean and profane;

such a degree of it, that, like the moon with respect to us, it shall go round its axis, while it performs its periodical revolution round the central body; and so as to turn always the same face towards it; so that one hemisphere shall be always enlightened by the sun, and the want of it in the other, shall be supplied by a supernatural light. But the four dark corners, (which where they are it is difficult to say) shall be the habitation of Gog and Magog. It is hard to determine whether this agrees less with the description here given, or the principles of good philosophy. See Whist. Theory, p. 44. But this is not a place to canvass such an hypothesis, nor is it necessary, after what the antagonist Kell has said concerning it. This gentleman also, thinks a comet shall

remove the moon from its orbit, so that it shall be converted into a primary planet, as he thinks it would have been at the flood, had it not been prevented by a peculiar providence.

[But only those, &c.] As it is certain, that nothing profane, abominable, and false, can here be considered as written in the book of life, this is another text to be added to the large catalogue I have given on John xvii. 13, where *such* is to be considered, not as an exception, but *adversative particle*. See Vol. II. sect. 172. note f.

\* There are many beautiful ideas in the description, which I have not collected together in this improvement, as some of them have been taken notice of before, and some occur in the next chapter.

## *The vision of the tree of life.*

none that work abomination and a lie, but the pure and pious, the humble and the holy. *Revel. iii. 10.* O Lord, to this character by thy grace; and never let the gaudy glare of sensual enjoyments, and worldly possessions, turn our eyes from contemplating this glorious sight, or alienate our hearts from the pursuit of this blessedness; till, having heard of it by the hearing of the ear, and believed the faithful report, our eyes shall behold these Divine substantial glories, which these emblems, resplendent as they are, can but imperfectly represent. In the mean time, O Lord, lead us onwards through what dark and gloomy path thou pleasest, to these abodes of light and glory; determine for us in what cottages we shall lodge, though ever so mean and obscure, while we are pursuing our journey to this royal, this imperial palace.

### S E C T. XXVI.

*The Apostle hath a further vision of the river of life, and of the tree of life, describes the happiness of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and receives a farther message from God by an Angel, before whom he is about to renew his prostration; but is forbidden. Rev. XXII. 1—9.*

REV. XXII. 1

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb

REVELATION XXII. 1.

AND having given me this view of the holy city, that is, the angel who descended to be my guide on this occasion, shewed me the pure river of the water of life, which was clear as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, an emblem of that perpetual life, and overflowing joy, which shall be the portion of all the blissful inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. And in the midst of the street

SECT. XXVI.

Rev. XXII. 1.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

of it, and on the one side and the other of the river, [was] the tree of life, (Gen. iii. 3. 22.) producing twelve different [kinds of] fruits, every month producing one [kind of] fruit; to signify the permanency and variety of those delights which spring up there. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations; beneath their salutary shade no disease shall ever invade the nations of the saved, but perpetual health shall flourish among them (Zech. xiv. 11.)

3 And there shall

And whereas in the earthly paradise Satan insinuated himself into the minds of the first parents of the human race, and the new-born glories of the creation were blasted by the curse which he

## The happiness of the new Jerusalem described.

introduced; in the heavenly paradise every fatal effect of the former curse ~~shall be removed~~, and no new evil shall ever arise; and the throne of God and the Lamb, upon which the Father and the Son sit together, shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, in the sacred offices of his temple, with far greater advantage than they have ever before done; And they shall see his face shining with unclouded lustre; and, in token of their perpetual devotedness to him, his name [shall be borne] upon their foreheads<sup>b</sup>, as the name of God was on that golden plate which the Jewish high-priest wore on his. . . And, to complete their happiness, there shall be no night there; and so they can have no need of a lamp, nor indeed of the light of the sun itself, that glorious fountain of lustre to this lower world, because, the Lord God shall enlighten them with the light of his own holiness and glory; and they shall reign as kings, for ever and ever, and enjoy an immortal life, far more delightful, splendid, and magnificent, than any monarch on earth has ever known.

6 And when he had said this to me, he added, Though these words which I have spoken, be token such glorious things, that they may seem in a manner incredible, yet is not the divine bounty and munificence to be estimated by any human standard; they [are] therefore to be received, and depended upon, as faithful and true. And these things, O John, are intended, not merely for thy own instruction and consolation, and much less for the gratification of thy curiosity; but the Lord God of the holy prophets has sent his angel, to shew to his servants, what must quickly

be ~~by~~ most curse but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their fore-heads.

5 And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. and they shall reign for ever and ever

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done

<sup>a</sup> Every curse shall continue. So the late learned Bishop of London, I think very justly, renders these words, which are plainly limited to the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, and must certainly therefore, refer to the final state of happiness, after the resurrection, till which time the saints of preceding ages will remain under the power of death, &c. to their souls, and the effect of the first curse be written in their dust

<sup>b</sup> Name upon their foreheads. It is elsewhere been observed, (sect. xvi. note 1,) that there was a custom prevail-

ing among many of the heathen, to inscribe on the foreheads the names, or symbolical marks, of the deity they worshipped; but the near connection between this clause, and that which related to their serving God in the offices of devotion, (for that *λατρεύω* signifies,) makes me think it more natural, to refer this to the inscription of Holiness and Love, written on the fore of the happy souls; and so it naturally leads us to reflect upon that intimate approach to the blessed God with which all these happy souls shall be honoured.

<sup>c</sup> Has sent his angel.] Perhaps the

## These glorious things St. John saw

be done, and to represent scenes, which it shall not be long ere they begin to open, though it may be long before they close. Yet, on the whole, I may in his name declare, *Behold, I come quickly to call my servants to an account: and blessed [is] he who keeps and perfectly observes, the words of the prophecy of this book;* for they will in such a manner direct his course, as that he shall escape many dangerous rocks, on which multitudes shall suffer shipwreck, to their eternal ruin.

7 Behold I come quickly: Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: Worship God.

*And I John, who wrote this book, am that person who saw and heard these things: and when I heard and saw [them,] I was so powerfully affected, that I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed these things to me, forgetting the manner in which the same kind of homage had lately been refused, upon a like occasion. And he also said to me, as the angel had before done, (chap. xix. 10.) See [thou do it] not, for I am a fellow-servant with thee, I am subject to the same Lord, and share in the duty and service of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book, which thou art now commanded to write: worship God alone, and divide not thy religious homage between him and any creature, how exalted and excellent soever.*

### IMPROVEMENT.

WE will not now employ our time in reviewing the infirmity of this holy apostle, who seems again to have fallen into the same danger of idolatry from which he had so lately been recovered. Nor will we stay to examine, whether he took this angel for our Lord Jesus Christ, as some have imagined, or to determine what homage it was he attempted to pay. Let us content ourselves for the present, with reflecting, how necessary it is we should be on our guard, against exceeding in our esteem and affection for creatures who have been the means of conveying to us signal ad-

apostle might think this angel to be Christ, and that he speaks of his own coming in the following verse. But Dr. Calamy argues the Deity of Christ from these words, which he thinks the context proves to be applicable to him. Compare ver. 16. Cal. on Trin. Ser. ii. p. 41.

Keep the words of this book.] There are indeed a multitude of things contained in this book which are of such a nature, that whoever pays a due regard to them, must necessarily be a true Christian, and entitled to all the blessings and promises of the gospel.

### *Reflections on our account of the tree of life.*

advantages, and especially assisting our views of the New Jerusalem:—To the contemplation of which, may we now return with new and growing delight.

Let us raise our eyes to the water of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb: to the tree of life, which grows on its banks and produces such a variety of fruit both for food and refreshment, and for the healing of the nations; to that more excellent paradise, in which there shall be no curse, where, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be scattered ten thousand blessings on all his servants; who shall there serve him, with everlasting, with increasing delight, being admitted to see his face, and exulting in their having the name of God written upon their foreheads; which they reckon a brighter and nobler ornament, than the most glorious crown or diadem, without such an inscription, could be. These are the words of truth and faithfulness: and, as such, may our faith embrace them and our souls ever rest upon them.

O that we may feel our thirst after this water of life, our hunger after this fruit of the tree of life, more powerfully excited. We shall, in both respects, be satisfied in the proper season; and, in the mean time, God will send us some refreshments, during our continuance in the wilderness. Already are we, if we are true believers, delivered from the curse; and those things, which were the original effects and consequences of it, shall be over-ruled by our gracious God, and converted into a blessing. And O, may Divine love, and every genuine regard to God and to the Lamb, prevail and govern in our hearts; and may our lives be devoted to that service, in which we hope our eternity will be employed. Have we not already, as it were, received the mark of God in our foreheads? Have we not solemnly enlisted ourselves to fight under the banner of Christ? Have we not, in repeated and most affecting solemnities and ordinances of his own institution, declared our desire of being for ever devoted to him? O let us ever remember the sacred engagement. Let holiness to the Lord be written on our hearts, as well as on our foreheads. Let all our affections, and all our faculties, all our possessions, and all our pursuits, be consecrated to God. To bear this name and inscription, will now, even in this dark and benighted world, shed a glory around us. It will be as a sacred guide to our ways, it will cheer and animate our hearts, it will bring down to us many a delightful foretaste of that world, where in his light, we shall see light, and where we shall reign with him for ever and ever. Amen.

*The future state is unalterable.*

• S E C T . XXVII.

*Our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes the Apostle, to discover to the churches what had been revealed to him; and solemnly declares his speedy approach, to fix the eternal state of men according to their characters and works* Rev. XXII. 10—15.

REV. XXII. 10.

AND he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last

REVELATION XXII. 10.

AND he, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom I received this revelation, saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book, so that they should not be immediately perused; for the time is near, in which the accomplishment of these things shall begin. Yea, the time is just approaching, when the last seal shall be set upon the characters of men, and when it shall be said on the one hand, *Let him that is unjust, be unjust still; and let him that is polluted, be polluted still;* for no more opportunities shall ever be granted for reforming what hath been amiss, and recovering the unrighteous and polluted soul to rectitude and purity. And, on the other hand, it shall be said, *Let him that is righteous, be righteous still; and let him that is holy, be holy still,* nothing shall ever happen to bring the virtues and graces of good men into any future danger, or under any cloud; but their righteousness and their holiness shall for ever shine; yea, shine with an increasing lustre.

And, to confirm this, Behold I come quickly; I shall be manifest ere it be long; and my reward, both of grace and vengeance, [is] with me, and I will recompense to every man according as his works shall be, whether it shall appear, on an impartial examination, to have been good or evil.

And, to confirm it further, I repeat it again, *I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last;* and what I say may be depended upon as the words of inviolable fidelity: Hear them, therefore, with attention and regard. And, since my nature and perfections are immutable, see that the necessary change be made in your-

\* And he, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ [hint] Many following words, and especially ver 12, prove that our Lord is here meant But it is a remarkable in-

stance of the reference of a relative to a remoter antecedent: a figure of speech, which I have taken notice of upon many former occasions. Heb. vii 2, note.

## Reflection on the unalterable nature of the future state.

selves, in order to your obtaining that happiness of which your sins may now render you incapable. *Happy [are] they, and they alone, who do his commandments, and so prepare for his important appearance, that they may have the privilege [to eat] of the tree of life; and they shall freely enter by the gates into the glorious city<sup>b</sup> I have described, and have their perpetual abode there. But, without [are] the unclean, who merit no better a name than that of dogs, as they debase their rational faculties to the service of detestable lusts; and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, who may justly be ranked together as the most abominable of sinners, and with them must be ranked too, every one who loveth and maketh a lie,<sup>c</sup> who forges falsehood, and practises it, or acts in any allowed contradiction to the great eternal rule of truth and rectitude.*

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

### IMPROVEMENT.

*Verse* LET us be very thankful, that the words of this prophecy are not sealed from us; but that truths, in which we have so important a concern, are so plainly published and proclaimed. *The time is near, when a seal will be set on the characters of men: blessed be God, he who is now unrighteous and polluted, may be purified and reformed, justified, and saved. Adored be that grace, that waits so long upon sinners! But the Divine long-suffering towards them will have its period: yet a little while, and Jesus comes, to render to every man according to his works. May we then be fixed in a work of immutable holiness and happiness.*

13 *The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, has discovered to us many evangelical truths in this mysterious book. He hath directed our eyes to the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood; and hath shewn us the saints in glory, laying down their crowns in his presence, and ascribing the praise, of all their salvation to him; but he hath shewn us nothing that is inconsistent with the necessity of real and universal holiness. Yes, he himself proclaims them alone to be entitled to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem, and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, who do God's commandments. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with vain words, nor attend to*

<sup>b</sup> Who do his commandments, &c.] This promise to all that do his commandments, that they shall enter into the gate of the city here described, evidently proves it to refer to that state of future happiness which all good men shall finally enjoy. Compare ver. 18, 19.

<sup>c</sup> Every one who loveth and maketh a lie.] Though idols are called lies, yet as idolaters had been mentioned before as excluded out of this New Jerusalem, I think it most natural to understand this clause in the sense given in the paraphrase.

*It is Christ who testifies the words of this prophecy.*

any who would sophisticate the word of God, and fixing their view only on some detached passages of it, enervate by their unguarded interpretations, its general scope and meaning. Let us, in reviewing scripture, observe what God commands and requires, and compare it with what he forbids, that we may thereby impartially judge and try ourselves. And how free soever we may be from any of the grosser crimes here enumerated, such as *fornication, murder, and idolatry*, let us not allow ourselves in the love and practice of any thing inconsistent with the *immutable rule of righteousness and truth*; as well knowing every allowed and continued indulgence of that kind, to be utterly irreconcilable with a well-grounded hope of inheriting eternal life. May it please thee, O Lord, to inscribe all these laws upon our hearts; that our joy, in the hope and prospect of the promised blessedness, may rise in proportion to our acquaintance with thy unerring word, and the impartiality and diligence with which we trace the actions of our lives, and the affections of our hearts, in comparison with it, and reduce them to a holy conformity to its precepts.

S E C T. XXVIII.

*Our Lord Jesus Christ repeats his august titles, and gracious invitation; warns us of the dreadful doom of him who shall add to, or take from his words, and declares his purpose of coming quickly; to which St John adds his hearty assent, and concludes with his apostolical benediction. Rev. XXII. 16, to the end.*

REV XXII 16

I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star

REVELATION XXII 16.

AND now to conclude the whole; be it known to every one, who reads these words, and let it be seriously considered by him, that *I Jesus* the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, have sent my beloved disciple and apostle John, as my messenger, to testify these things to you, in the several churches into whose hands this may come. And let it also be remembered, in order to add a due weight to the testimony, that *I am the Root and the Offspring of David*, by whose Divine power David himself was made, though as to my human nature, I have condescended to ally myself to him, and be born from his house: *I am the bright and the morning Star*, who wear a glory exceeding that of the most brilliant celestial luminary, and usher in a glorious and eternal day. And the great substance and design of the message is, to awaken in the minds of all to whom it comes,

SECT.

XXVIII.

Rev.

XXII 16

17 And the Spirit and the bride say,

17 great substance and design of the message is, to awaken in the minds of all to whom it comes,



*If any one add to them, God will severely punish him.*

an earnest desire of those blessings which from this throne of my glory I am to dispense. And accordingly I do now anew publish the invitation: *the Spirit* with which I inspire my servants, *and the bride*, the church to whom I am espoused, concur to say, *Come*; and let him, even every one that heareth, say, *Come*. Let every one echo the invitation, and let my people, in all ages, consider it as their duty to do it. *And let him that is thirsty, Come; and whosoever will, let him apply to me in my appointed way, and receive of the waters of life freely*; behold it flows in a full current from my throne; and if any man do not receive a part or share of it, without money, and without price, the fault is only chargeable upon himself.

- 18 This important testimony I commission my servant to bear: *and I also testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If anyman add unto these things, God shall add unto him, and bring upon him, the most terrible of those plagues which are written in this book*<sup>b</sup>: he will, by any designed addition to them, or corruption of them, make himself highly criminal, and eternally miserable. *And if any one take away from the words of the book of this prophecy*, with a design thereby to diminish in any degree, by the omission of what is disagreeable to him, or others whom he may desire to please and favour, *God will severely punish such a*

*Come*. And let him that heareth, say, *Come*. And let him that is thirsty, *Come*. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall

<sup>b</sup> *Whosoever will, let him receive, &c.*] Such a declaration, of free grace seems to have been wisely inserted just in the close of the sacred canon, to encourage the hope of every humble soul, that is truly desirous of the blessings of the gospel; and to guard against those suspicions of Divine goodness which some have so unhappily abetted. The word *λαβειτω*, which we render *take*, does often signify *receive*; and the word *δωται*, is as much as *gratis*, which implies the freedom of the gift; and I think may probably refer to that celebrated invitation, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.*

<sup>b</sup> *If any man add to, &c.*] It is true, this particularly refers to the book of the Revelation: but the parity of reason extending to other books, I doubt not the terror of the threatening does, so too. God forbid we should imagine every

honestly mistaken criticism, where there is a question of receiving or excluding any particular verse, should affect a man's salvation, in consequence of what is here said! But I think such a passage should make men very cautious, that they may not rashly incur any censure on this account; though undoubtedly the terror of the threatening is planted against any design of erasure or addition. I shall conclude this note with declaring, that I have endeavored to carry on my commentary on the sacred books with this thought in my view, and that I have neither designedly attempted to establish any thing, which did not appear to me to be a doctrine of scripture, nor drop any thing which did appear so. And whereinsomver, through human infirmity, and the want of a closer and more accurate attention, I have failed either way, I commit myself, to the mercy of that Redeemer, whose word it is, and whose interest I have faithfully endeavoured to serve.

*And in like manner, if any take one away from them.* 151

take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. sacrilege, and *take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the glorious things, even the invaluable blessings which are written, and described in the preceding passages of this book.*<sup>c</sup>

20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

*He who testifies these important things, says,* 20 and leaves it as his parting warning with all that read them, *Surely I come quickly.* My soul, while I write it, replies, and let every reader reply with me from his heart, *Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus;* come surely, and quickly, as thou hast said; for all our highest and sublimest hopes depend upon the blessed and glorious day of thy appearance.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

In the mean time, let the churches to whom 21 these messages are especially directed and inscribed, receive my most affectionate wishes, my most solemn benediction, which I express in this one ardent prayer: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, even all the invaluable effects of his favour, and above all, the abundant communications of his Spirit, [be] with you all, and with all Christians, to whom these words may come, unto the end of the world. Amen.*

#### IMPROVEMENT.

How sweetly and delightfully does the canon of scripture <sup>Verse</sup> conclude, leaving, as it were, the music of heaven upon the attentive ear. 16 “O thou blessed *Root and Offspring of David*, O thou *bright and morning Star*, impress on all our hearts these thy gracious words, which thou hast condescended to speak from the *throne of thy glory*; thereby, as it were, to aid the weakness of our faith, in those which thou didst deliver, while dwelling in mortal flesh.” Then did the compassionate Saviour proclaim, from an eminence in the temple, to a crowded assembly on a day of peculiar solemnity, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:* (John vii. 37.) And now behold he makes the same proclamation from his celestial temple; he points, as it 17 were, to the fountain-head of happiness, to the *springs of the water of life*, near the throne of God, and says, *Whoever will, let him come, let him take, let him freely take of this living water;*

<sup>c</sup> *God will take away his part, &c.]* Since God threatens the *plagues written in this book* and the loss of a *part in the holy city*, as what might be the portion of those who should presume to corrupt it, and such corruption might happen in any age of the church; I think it very

evident, that the *holy city*, spoken of in the preceding chapter, is a representation of the *heavenly state* to be enjoyed by all good men, how applicable soever it may seem to any glorious scene preceding the final judgment: and that Rev. xx. 11, &c. refers to the universal judgment.

sect. yea, and not content with speaking this language by *his Spirit*  
 xxviii. only, he calls on *his bride*, to lift up her melodious voice, to  
 publish this kind invitation; he calls on *every one that hears it*,  
 Verse to echo it back, as if the excess of his goodness overcame him,  
 18 as if it were necessary to *his own* happiness, that men should  
 accept of *their own* salvation.

With what sacred observance should these books be guarded,  
 which contain a message of such infinite importance! Of what  
 dreadful curses are they worthy, who presume to *add* to what is  
 already *perfect*, or to *take away* from that which is in every part  
*Divine*. I trust none of us shall ever presumptuously attempt  
 to do it: and may we be preserved from those mistaken inter-  
 19 pretations, in consequence of which, we should teach the world,  
 as by his authority, any thing which he has not dictated, or deny  
 any thing which carries along with it the stamp of such an au-  
 thority.; "Have pity, O Lord, upon our *weakness*; impute not  
*prejudices* which thou knowest we do not allow; and give us a  
 greater *penetration of mind*, to understand the true sense of thy  
 word; a *simplicity* of heart, to receive it; an *integrity*, so far as  
 the duty of our places requires, to declare it; and a *zeal* to in-  
 culcate and defend it."

And while we are thus employed, or employed in any other  
 services which Providence has assigned us, in our respective sta-  
 20 tions and circumstances of life; whatever labours may exercise  
 us, whatever difficulties may surround us, whatever sorrows may  
 depress us, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, *Be-  
 hold, I come quickly*; I come to put a period to the labour and  
 suffering of my servants; I come, and *my reward* of grace is  
*with me*, to *recompense* with royal bounty, *every work* of faith,  
 and labour of love; I come to receive my faithful persevering  
 people to myself, to dwell for ever in that blissful world, where  
 the sacred volume, which contains the important discoveries of  
 my will, shall be no more necessary; but knowledge, and holi-  
 ness, and joy, shall be poured in upon their souls in a more im-  
 mediate, in a nobler and more effectual manner. *Amen, even  
 so come, Lord Jesus*. Hasten the blessed hour to us, and to *all  
 thy churches*, as far as it may consist with thy wise and holy  
 21 counsels. And, in the mean time may thy *grace be with us*, to  
 keep alive the remembrance of thy love, and the expectation of  
 thy coming, in our hearts, and to animate us to a temper and  
 conduct, which may suit the blessings we have already received,  
 and the nobler felicity after which thou hast taught us to aspire  
*Amen and amen*.

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